Born to be Satisfied?

A Sociological Study of Job Satisfaction of Teachers in a Hong Kong Secondary School

by

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Abstract

This thesis attempts to demonstrate the viability of an alternative approach, in theoretical and methodological dimensions, to a sociological study of job satisfaction. Prevalent findings are drawn from mainly psychological researches, and they are generated from survey results using the constructs of "needs" and "dispositions". A common theme in these approaches is that the affection of people is regulated by some innate mechanism which tends to persist over time and across work situations. Theoretically, there are two lines of critique on them. On the one hand, these explanatory constructs are conceptually unclear and difficult to define. Statistical significance in data analysis is used to mask the inadequacy of the vaguely elaborated constructs. On the other hand, an active image of man rooted in Weberian and interactionist approaches sheds light on the importance of the work environment in affecting job satisfaction. Methodologically, the current practice of survey and quantitative analysis is inadequate to unravel the interpretation of actors leading to specific attitudes and behaviours. Methods deriving from qualitative researches which employ various techniques such as participant observation, interviews and documentary analysis are used to collect the data in substantiating the theoretical argument. An intensive case study of a Hong Kong aided secondary school reveals the process of how the objective of defining job satisfaction as well as the means of deriving it through the cultivation of a sense of efficacy are subject to the influence of the school policies, colleagues and students.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Imagine the following exchanges about the views of a group of teachers on their jobs are taking place when you open the door of a staffroom:

> *I am not sure about the future of my job. I find it difficult to figure out my future plan, but I think in the coming years I would still be teaching here, not to leave the profession altogether.*
>
> *If there were an easier job, I would leave the present job. To speak the truth, however, basically you do not have many alternatives after so many years of teaching.*
>
> *In the foreseeable future, I do not have such plans. Maybe my situation is special because I concentrate on teaching students of higher forms and only occasionally teaching lower forms. The pressure from teaching lower forms to me is not very great, and so for the time being, I can still tolerate, ha ha ... But how long can I endure the present situation, I cannot say for myself, ha ha ...*
>
> *If somebody promises to pay the mortgage for my house, I would quit the job at once. In times of depression I would sit down and think if I can walk my life again, that is, I need not pay for the house and have not married, I would not choose to teach.*

The above conversation is fictional; indeed it will probably not be brought into open discussion by teachers. Nevertheless the accounts are real enough: it is what teachers say about their works privately during interviews.

For the greatest beneficiary of students, the educational system demands more than a group of persons merely instructing and allocating course work in classrooms. Instead it requires a devoted staff team who is eager to invest their time and effort in the profession. The above account reflects that not all teachers in Hong Kong are

both "red and expert". Sikes et al. (1985) have delineated several types of commitment held by teachers, ranging from "vocational commitment" in which the job is considered as a channel to actualize personal ideals to "career continuance" where the function of the job to earn a living becomes the primary concern. Hence their attitudes and affection towards their career become an important topic in addition to their decision to stay or quit. Since the concept of job satisfaction is used widely to conceptualize these feelings, it will be the focus of the present research.

The Inquiry of Job Satisfaction: from Consequences to Antecedents

Job satisfaction constitutes a vital field of study in organizational behaviour due to its presumed importance to various related phenomenon such as productivity, absenteeism, turnover and psychological withdrawal. Evidence of its significance can be seen from the mounting piles of academic researches. For instance, there were already over 800 studies on the topic when Ng (1973) reviewed the field, and the figure had jumped over 3000 in an extensive review by Locke (1976). It was only three years' time when O'Connor found that there were already over 4000 entries of work on the topic. A recent estimation of entries in the topic goes beyond 5000 by Cranny, Smith and Stone (1992).

Initially the concern of these studies was on predicting the effect of job satisfaction on other organizational behaviours. Human Relations School had sparked off a series of studies based upon the results of group climate on the increasing output productivity, and it was not until in 1950s that reflections were made upon the presumed direction of study. Brayfield and Crockett (1955) concluded from their review that there was little evidence that attitudes bore any simple or even

appreciative relation to performance, although it was related to absenteeism and turnover. Similarly, Vroom (1964) came up with the judgement that there was small though fairly consistent relations between satisfaction and performance. It was further echoed by Locke (1976) who found that in general the consistent correlation found between satisfaction and turnover went rarely over 0.4 (see also Mobley et al., 1979). Not to abandon the whole enterprise of research, further studies had directed the focus into the process of how dissatisfaction led to the decision of quitting a job. Perceived opportunity for other jobs was considered as another important variable intervening the process (March and Simon, 1958; Price, 1977) and a more detailed investigation of the process between dissatisfaction with a job and the intention to quit is called for (Mobley, 1977).

Another research direction came from the study by Lawler and Porter (1967). The insight of their study was that satisfaction was resulted from high performance rather than being a cause of it. Instead of researching on job satisfaction as an independent variable affecting other organizational behaviours, the study had opened a gateway to investigate it as an dependent variable requiring explanations. The rationale behind the turn was that if job satisfaction proved to be a significant variable on various organizational behaviours, further research should be directed towards inquiring the antecedents of the variable. This line of research had been brought into prominence in recent decades. As the topic was researched predominately by psychological studies, it was understandable that the explanations offered were based upon some innate forces such as attributes, needs and dispositions.

A more detailed review of psychological approaches will be introduced in next chapter. Their relevance to the research problem of the present study is that **a more**

profound understanding on the antecedents of job satisfaction is obtained through a sociological perspective. Instead of confining the causes of job satisfaction to some innate psychological mechanisms they should be placed under a social context in which a configuration of social forces in the work environment is influencing the actor. Beneath the alternate approach is the rejection of an assumed image of man in the stimuli-response model, arguing that the actions performed by an actor should not been treated as mechanistic responses to external stimuli. A process of interpretation is operating in guiding the actions of an actor. To anticipate on main arguments in subsequent chapters, the most important implication is highlighted here. Briefly, **a case study of a Hong Kong secondary school suggests how the objective of defining and the means of obtaining job satisfaction are bound up with the interpretations of teachers, which are shaped by the school context.**

Before unfolding these arguments in detail, some preliminaries have to be addressed briefly. First, it is necessary to state out the theoretical and empirical rationale for choosing the teaching profession as a case study of job satisfaction. Second, the methodology and data collection process will be sketched out. The remaining sections are devoted to these tasks.

Researching in the teaching profession

In Hong Kong, the teaching profession is having a difficult time. A complex constellation of factors is relevant to this difficult situation, but here I shall only discuss the consequences of the problems.

The prominent problem in the late 1980s is teacher turnover. A survey conducted by K.C. Wong (1990) in a sample of aided schools discovered that in 1989

the turnover rate of grammar school teachers amounted to 15.6% (N=1673). Although sex (M=36%; F=64%), length of teaching (6 years or below amount to 71%) and educational levels of teachers (GM grade including SGM accounts for 71%) made a difference, the breakdown according to their further jobs revealed that 23.06% of teachers changed their professions while 38.65% left the current school. Inter-school mobility remained high in the profession in addition to wastage rate.

Stepping into 1990s, teachers have to encounter new problems. With the economic backlash, teachers find it difficult to change their occupations. Figures from *Teachers Survey* 1995 revealed that the wastage rate of both graduated and non-graduated teachers has fallen from the peak in 1990.

Table 1 : Wastage Rates of Teachers in Secondary Schools from 1986 to 1994

Year	Wastage Rate (%) Graduated Teachers	Non-Graduated Teachers	Total
1986	7.5	11.4	9.0
1987	8.2	9.5	8.7
1988	9.6	9.8	9.7
1989	10.4	10.3	10.3
1990	12.6	10.9	11.9
1991	11.9	11.7	11.8
1992	11.9	10.6	11.4
1993	11.6	9.7	10.9
1994	10.5	8.3	9.7

Source: Teachers' Survey 1995, Education Department.

Nevertheless, the figures should not be misinterpreted that the problems faced by teachers have been alleviated in recent years. The symptom of the problem is reflected in increasing occupational stress and suicide. There were 12 cases of

suicide from 1991 to 1993, and 4 cases were found in 1994 (Jan., 1995, p.65). A survey conducted by in December 1994 discovered that 93% of teachers felt stressful in their work. 52% of teachers found their job boring and 54% of them considered their work as receiving undue attention (Ibid).

These figures suffice to tell that the problems faced by teachers have not been alleviated. Teachers are not satisfied with their work throughout the decade, and it is time to find out how it is bred in their work. Let us inspect our stock of knowledge on why teachers are dissatisfied with their jobs.

With regard to local studies on job satisfaction, it is not difficult to spot that their sample varies widely, ranging from teachers in primary school (Lo, 1994), international school (Ng, 1994), principals (Law, 1987) and vice-principals (Kwok, 1987) in secondary schools to Education Officers (Administration) of Education Department (To, 1992).

Two pieces of work have direct relevance to the present study. T.H. Wong (1988) has surveyed 275 teachers to conclude that teachers in Hong Kong generally were not satisfied with their jobs. He argued that job dissatisfaction of teachers did not constitute the most important reason for turnover: "teachers' affective feeling towards their job is not the chief factors affecting their job-leaving decision" (p.98). External constraints such as career stages, family responsibilities and their human capital inhibited dissatisfied teachers from leaving the profession.

In view of their source of dissatisfaction, a more detailed investigation of the statistics suggested that the sample of teachers were putting high ratings on the workplace conditions. In a scale indicating satisfaction ranging from -1 to 1, the

teachers revealed that they were most satisfied with the level of income (0.835) whereas the second one are about the job nature (0.561) and relations with colleagues (0.595). They had only slightest satisfaction with the principals (0.085) and students (0.073) and showed strong dissatisfaction with promotion opportunities (-0.740). However, the present satisfaction they reported did not mean that they were treasuring these factors according to this ranking. Another scenario emerged if we took into account of their weighting of these factors. In a scale of 0 to 10 measuring their satisfaction, the most weighted factor was job nature (4.26), their relations with the principal (4.21), colleagues (4.21) and students (4.11). They weighted the importance of income (3.92) after all these factors. Weighting of promotion of opportunities ranked second lowest (3.52). What these figures told was that teachers perceived their jobs and working conditions (relations with the principal, colleagues and students) as most important dimensions. Extrinsic rewards (income and promotion opportunities) ranked low in priority. Combining these figures, we could see that although teachers were satisfied with their job nature, there was slight satisfaction stemming from this aspect. The paradox was that what teachers treasured most was not realized and what they considered the least importance to their work became the main source of satisfaction.

Wu (1993) used the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) to measure job satisfaction of 415 secondary school teachers. His results suggested that teachers were most dissatisfied with the promotion aspect, but satisfied with supervision and colleagues. Inconsistent results were found with regard to the facets of job nature and pay. In addition, variations in student qualities made a difference in teacher satisfaction.

The two studies suggest that workplace factors play a significant component

in affecting the psychological state of teachers. But they do not go beyond these conclusions to investigate the process of how teachers come to have such affection due to theoretical and methodological constraints. It relates to the theoretical significance of the present studies, which will be discussed below.

Despite repeated findings about occupational differences in job satisfaction studies (Blauner, 1964, 1966; Grunberg, 1980; Ng, 1973; Spuck, 1974; Tabaka, 1987), most researches take no heed to them and keep on studying the phenomenon in a universal manner. Such neglect inevitably hinders fruitful studies in unravelling distinct mechanisms that lead to specific types of affections to the members in each occupation.

Theoretically, there are two reasons voting for the teaching profession. First, the work features inherent in the profession pose challenges to the fundamental rationale behind traditional studies of job satisfaction. Second, the profession can highlight the problem of applying measurements of job satisfaction in a universal manner.

The peculiarities of the profession arise from the distinctiveness of the work setting. Unlike most occupations, the work of teachers resides mainly in an isolated environment, the classroom, where it is separated from the wider structure of the school. The loosely structured condition (Bidwell, 1965; Weick, 1979) has two implications for the turbulent work nature of teachers. Psychologically, teachers suffer from the symptom of "endemic uncertainties" in their work as they are always unsure of their effort paid (Lortie, 1975; Ashton and Webb, 1986). Socially, teachers find themselves aloof to make enormous instant decisions in classroom daily (Jackson,

1968), and to make continual negotiations, bargains as well as concessions with students in due course of their teaching process. No single rule can be applied universally.

These characteristics thus render a forum to test candidates regarding the antecedents of job satisfactions. Although relatively stable levels of job satisfaction may be explained adequately by psychological factors, cases of drastic experience and even the changing definition of what constitutes job satisfaction by actors suffices re-evaluation of the validity of such explanations fundamentally. The impact of social factors and most importantly, the interpretations of actors to them, should be taken into consideration seriously.

Another issue underlying the choice of selecting teaching profession is that previous measurements fail to consider the distinctiveness of occupations. The work setting in teaching profession is a case in point to reveal such shortcomings. In educational researches, Job Descriptive Index (Smith et al., 1969, 1985) is probably the most widely used facet satisfaction instrument with well documented reliability and validity. In the five facets being measured, two of them are about adult-adult relationships (supervisor, co-workers), two pertain to extrinsic work inducements (pay and promotion) and the remaining facet is about the work nature. Nowhere are there direct or indirect references to students and interpersonal work which constitute the most important source of satisfaction in the work of teachers (Kottkamp, 1990). The same neglect is found in the review of job satisfaction studies by Miskel and Ogawa (1988).

Thus the dynamic, interactive nature of the teaching profession suits best to the objectives of challenging the existing psychological models on job satisfaction,

exposing their methodological pitfalls and exploring alternative perspective to approach the phenomenon.

Methodology and Data Collection

Case study is used as the research design of the present study, and the rationale stems from the requirement of capturing the interpretations of teachers.[1] Following Becker (1968), the dual purposes of a case study consist of arriving at a comprehensive understanding of the group under study and developing more general theoretical statements about regularities in social structure and process. Due to limited time and resources, the findings from a single case study here will be restricted to the suggestion of propositions awaiting modifications from other studies. In achieving the aim of a comprehensive understanding of the case, various techniques of data collection such as participant observation, interviews and documentary analysis are employed. The following section is to present a profile of data collection in this research.

The period of data collection lasts for five months. Starting from 1 September of 1994 which was the beginning of a new academic term, the period of participant observation ended at January of 1995 which marked the beginning of the Lunar New Year Holiday. In this period, the researcher had participated most of the school activities and festivals and defined his role as a "complete observer" (Gold, 1958) in these activities. On average two to three days in a week were spent in the school.

1. The point will be elaborated later in next chapter, and the argument by Herbert Blumer serves as the rationale for choosing qualitative research methods.

Table 2 List of School Activities Held from August 1994 to January 1995

Date	School Activities
30 August, 1994	First staff meeting
30 September, 1994	Second staff meeting
6 November, 1994	Form One Parents' Day
28 Nov - 5 Dec, 1994	First term examination
23 December, 1994	Last teaching day before Christmas Holiday No teaching but a celebration program
4 January, 1995	Meeting for Sports Day and Parents Day Distribution of questionnaires in meeting
5-6 January, 1995	Sports Day
15 January, 1995	Whole School Parents' Day

Preliminary contact with the school began at early July, and there had been several times of discussions with the principal about the purpose of the research before I was introduced formally to the teaching team at the annual staff meeting on 31 August of 1994 (See Appendix I for the introduction letter). Effort had been made, however, to avoid an impression that the researcher had any association with the principal in order to gain confidence of teachers and enhance the reliability of data. I was soon warmly received and accepted by the staff, and it was not long before they treated me as part of their team. On some occasions students had query about my status when I was talking with other teachers, and I was introduced to the students by them as a teacher there. About two months after the research had begun, I was invited to represent the teachers' team to participate in the basketball match between teachers and students held regularly. At the prize giving ceremony held at the last day before the Christmas holiday, I was asked by several teachers to take a

seat at the stage reserved for the principal and teachers. Although I decline their invitations, these events could reflect their trust and recognition on my role, which led them to treat me as part of their team.

Before describing the procedures for collecting data, a word is needed for the scant documentary data used in this research. Although it is a 30-year-old school, the school found itself poor in preserving its history. There are no year books and past school records; only a school newsletter is distributed yearly to all students beginning from mid 80s. Such inadequate documents shift the focus of collecting data about the development of the school through interviews with teachers. Fortunately, the school has a rather stable teaching team and over the years only several teachers have left. The most experienced teacher has been teaching here since 1966, the second year since the founding of the school. Another three teachers has been teaching here since early 70s, and the principal was only a new teacher in 1975. The composition of the teaching staff thus enables a reconstruction of the development of the school.

Comparatively, there are more documentary data about the recent development of the school. Part of the reason relates to the setting up of institutions in recent years with the change of the principal. With the establishment of guidance and discipline teams, files are opened to record the events during the years. Hence a variety of documents becomes available to the researcher in last few years. In this research, several pieces of documents are employed such as staff meetings, panel meetings in each subject, and the record of guidance and discipline team.

Because most of the data comes from interviews with teachers, it is necessary to describe more about the procedures involved. At times other than conducting interviews and participating school activities, the researcher resided mainly in the

staffroom talking and arranging interviews with teachers. With the exception of the principal and the school social worker, a total of 20 teachers have been interviewed. One of them had already left and is currently teaching in another school. Consisting of over half of the total staffs in the school, the sample represents teachers of different sex, seniority, staffroom location and years of teaching experience.[2]

Table 3 Profile of the Characteristics of Interviewed Teachers

Classification	Distribution
Sex:	15 Males and 5 Females
Staffroom distribution:	17 teachers in 3rd floor
	3 teachers in 2nd floor
Length of teaching:	1 - 5 years : 12
	6 - 10 years : 1
	Over 10 years : 7
Pay scale:	CM : 7
	SAM : 1
	GM : 5
	SGM : 4
	AM : 1

The first few weeks were spent to build up rapport with teachers so that the first interview did not start until the end of October. All interviews were recorded with approval and most of them were transcribed. In order to avoid possible adverse effects of discussing school policies at the presence of other colleagues, all interviews were arranged individually and held in non-staffroom settings such as in canteen, physics laboratory, the counselling room and chemistry laboratory. It also provided a quiet atmosphere where distortions from recording were minimized. Although respondents were free to give their opinions on various issues, they are guided by a

[2] Individual characteristics are not disclosed to protect the anonymity of subjects.

semi-structured questionnaire (see Appendix II for the question sheet). As they could not spare much time, the interviews usually took about one or at most two lessons from their teaching timetable, that is, from 35 to at most 70 minutes. Some of the them had been interviewed twice to supplement some missing data conducted in the previous interview.

In addition to interviewing with teachers, a small survey had been conducted to collect the attitudes of teachers on several issues (See Appendix IV for the questionnaire). The questionnaires attached with envelopes were distributed at the end of a staff meeting held at 4 January, 1995. A total of 16 questionnaires were collected, and part of them were given to the researcher immediately. For those who postponed the completion of the questionnaires, they were asked to seal and hand it to the general office so as to enhance the degree of anonymity and thus the accuracy of the responses. The distribution of the 16 questionnaires also exhibited heterogeneity of various characteristics.

Another type of data came from the compilation of fieldnotes. They were collected from various settings consisting of personal and public discussions with teachers, chatting with them in the staffroom and observations from daily routines of school lives. All of them were recorded and typed at the day of taking the fieldnotes.

The last category of data utilized was from the manipulation of some raw aggregate data which Becker (1968) referred them as "quasi-statistics". In the present research, it consisted of the counting of last year's discipline and guidance records. The availability of data has constrained comparisons of records over time, but it can dispose null hypothesis that some types of phenomenon are infrequent, and give stronger support to tentative hypothesis.

Table 4 Profile of the Characteristics of Respondents in the Survey

Classification	Distribution
Number of respondents	16
Sex distribution	11 Males and 4 Females
Staffroom distribution:	
	12 teachers in 3rd floor
	2 teachers in 2nd floor
	1 teacher in PE staffroom
Length of teaching:	
	1 - 5 years : 10 teachers
	6 - 10 years : 1 teacher
	Over 10 years : 4 teachers
Pay Scale:	
	CM : 4 teachers
	SAM : nil
	GM : 7 teachers
	SGM : 3 teachers
	AM : 1 teacher
Age:	
	20 - 25: 4 teachers
	26 - 30: 3 teachers
	31 - 35: 1 teacher
	36 - 40: 5 teachers
	41 - 45: 1 teacher
	46 - 50: 1 teacher

Note: a respondent leaves all demographic data blank

Organization of Chapters

Having introduced the problematic of the research, the following chapters are devoted to elaborating the arguments in detail. Chapter 2 challenges current theoretical explanations of job satisfaction in psychological studies and argues that the interpretations of actors must be taken into account in light of sociological perspectives. The concepts of efficacy and culture of teachers are used to conceptualize the process of interpretations. Since the meaning attribution process

is embedded in a social context, chapter 3 is a reconstruction of school developments from the viewpoint of teachers. The interface between the societal environment and the school history is analyzed in its relation to the shaping of the work faced by teachers. Chapter 4 and 5 deal with the core element of teachers' work: instruction and discipline. Apart from analyzing how various school factors such as school assignment and culture of teachers affect their attainment of job satisfaction, the difficulty faced by some teachers is so great that they shift their source of satisfaction to successful disciplining of students in classrooms. Chapter 6 recapitulates previous arguments and raise some implications from the research.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Recasting Approaches to Job Satisfaction Studies

This chapter reviews the major theoretical approaches to job satisfaction, the concept that is still attracting vast attention from the literature of psychology under the branch of organizational behaviour.

Faced with huge amount of literature, one would be induced to give a summary on all of these studies which is neither necessary nor possible. Bewildered by the enormous time spent and effort put on the topic, it is ironic that the literature is largely overwhelmed by non-theoretical repetition of variable analysis. Recent researches are legitimated on previous several thousand similar studies, and their problematic is to refine the measurement and compare the results with past studies. As a consequence, even demographic variables are subject to intensive researches without a vigorous framework. Studies on age and sex (Dalton & Marcis, 1987; Forgionnes & Peelers, 1982; Mottaz, 1986; Murray & Atkinson, 1981; Quinn, Staines & McCullough, 1974; Smith Kendall & Hulin, 1969) is a case in point. Other organizational factors on job satisfaction are heavily researched in non-theoretical manner (see Locke, 1976 for some significant factors discovered).

Efforts on refining the measurement result in three widely accepted job satisfaction measure: the Job Description Index (JDI) (Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969,

1985), the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss et al., 1967) and the Michigan Measure of Facet Satisfaction (Quinn & Staines, 1979). They are using a simple additive measure of various aspects of the job including supervision, working conditions and the task itself. The presumption that vigorous measurement can replace the theoretical explanation of the concept has led Staw (1984) to criticize the whole body of research as a theory-free one in his review of the field in the *Annual Review of Psychology*:

> While much effort has historically been placed on developing reliable measures of satisfaction, little work has focused on the construct of satisfaction itself. ... The field's current usage of satisfaction is as a theory-free affective variable, yet the measurement of satisfaction probably involves additional conceptual baggage that leads one implicitly to discrepancy theories and models of social comparison (p.631).

While it is justifiable to conclude that "over the last 30 years, most of the research on job satisfaction has been a rather atheoretical listing of variables that are statistically associated with work attitudes" (Ibid), it would be too harsh to say that no theory is accounted for the phenomenon. Review of the antecedents of job satisfaction reveals that two approaches in the literature of psychology are trying to pose a theoretical explanation. Although the details of their theories will be discussed below, the crux of these approaches should be mentioned briefly here. They argue that individuals possess some unobservable mental states or dispositions that are relatively stable over time and that determine, at least to a large extent, the attitudes and behaviour of members in organizations (Weiss & Adler, 1984). It is from this premise that they try to demonstrate it through strong correlations among variables, and thereby posing theoretical elements on them.

The following section reviews the needs model and dispositional approach to the study of job satisfaction respectively. The core theoretical elements in each

approach will be highlighted, important pieces of work reviewed and a critique followed.

The Needs-Satisfaction Model

The core of the need-satisfaction model is that "job attitudes and, occasionally, motivation, are presumed to result from the correspondence between the needs of the individual and the characteristics of the job or the job situation" (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977, p.428). In other words, job satisfaction is derived from a matching between some job characteristics and human needs. Jobs which fulfil a person's needs are satisfying; those that do not are not satisfying.

Under this premise, many theories of human needs can be seen as an elaboration or modification of the model. One of the earliest theory accounting for a universal human need is Taylorism. Implicit in his theory is a model of economic man in which man is primarily motivated by economic incentives. Wage increase would lead to increased satisfaction and hence productivity of workers. Gaining great popularity in 20s and early 30s, Taylorism has initiated many related studies such as fatigue studies (Taylor and Gilbreth, 1970; Vernon, 1921; Wyatt, 1927) and boredom studies (Wyatt, Fraser and Stock, 1929; Wyatt, Langdon and Stock, 1937).

Hawthrone studies had discovered "deviant" responses of workers in a factory in Western Electric Plant. The need of being recognized and the practice of group norms were found to be more effective in increasing productivity (Mayo, 1960; Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939). Later Mayo expounded the study to develop a conception of "social man" in which people need a kind of solidarity from workplace which have been lost in traditional societies. The effect of co-worker is then figured

out as the prominent factor in providing satisfaction to workers in a bored setting of factories. Its impact carries through the Post World War II era mainly through the works of Homans (1950), Whyte (1955), Fleishman (1972), Halpin and Winer (1957), Likert (1961) and Marrow et al. (1967).

It is not until Maslow (1943, 1954) that a comprehensive theory of human needs is formulated. The theory suggests that every person has five basic needs: physiological needs, safety needs, affiliation needs, achievement and esteem needs and the need for self-actualization. They are arranged in a hierarchial order in that the lower-level needs must be satisfied before there is the quest for needs at a higher level. He further claims that (1970, ch.6) this need hierarchy is instinctual, or that such needs could be almost universally observed, even in different cultures. Therefore people will be satisfied with their jobs if the nature of the work can match with their needs. Since the satisfied needs is not to be considered as a motivator, the theory follows that higher-order needs are becoming more and more important as the lower-order needs have been satisfied in modern society. The implication of the theory is clear: job satisfaction is enhanced when the work can unfold the "potential" of people to "actualize" their innate needs.

Later Herzberg (Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman, 1959; Herzberg, 1966) contributed to the determinants of job satisfaction in a more ground-breaking way in that there are two types of human needs. Traditional theories tend to conceive job satisfaction as a continuum in which its opposite is job dissatisfaction. In other word, job satisfaction means lack of job dissatisfaction. His theory argues, however, that factors leading to job satisfaction are different in nature from those causing job dissatisfaction. Drawing on two biblical figure of Adam and Abraham, Herzberg

(1962) regards the former image of man as one who quests for maintenance of physical well-being whereas the latter one represents the need to search for mental and psychological growth. Correspondingly, he identified the factors leading to job dissatisfaction as hygiene factors and those causing job satisfaction as motivators. The two-factor theory demonstrates that motivators such as giving achievement and recognition through the job lead to job satisfaction but the lack of it will not make one feel dissatisfied. In the same way, those identified as hygiene factors such as income and relations with supervisors indicate another type of needs in which adequate amount of it will not make one satisfied with the job.

Appealing as the theories of Maslow and Herzberg may be, few empirical researches have given strong support to the structure of universal human needs predictable in all job settings. Blackler and Williams commented that "it has proved easy to interpret situations by his [Maslow's] model, but rather more elusive to actually test it out" (1971, p.291). Locke echoed with the argument that "in practice, it has been common for researchers to cite findings (e.g., differences in 'need satisfaction' between job levels) as being 'consistent' with Maslow's theory, but rare for them to make direct tests of it using the longitudinal method" (1976, p.1309). An empirical test by Hall and Nougaim (1968) argued that it was the effect of career change and advancement in face of the findings that safety needs became less important while higher-order needs were more important as managers advanced. Some reviews also gave only partial support to the theory (see Miner & Dachler, 1973; Wahba and Bridwell, 1976).

In one sense, Herzberg's two-factor theory can be seen as a rejection of Maslow's theory. The separation of motivators from hygiene factors implies the

demarcation of the first two levels of needs (physiological and safety needs) from the higher levels of needs. For Herzberg, the first two levels of needs are not to be considered as causes for job satisfaction. They should be treated as hygiene factors in that adequate levels of them would not elicit dissatisfaction only.

In the rejection to the theory of Maslow, Herzberg's theory also suffers from severe attacks on theoretical and methodological grounds. The most acute theoretical critique is that the dichotomy of motivator and hygiene factors had ignored the interrelatedness of them in many ways. Hygiene factors such as managerial decisions and supervisory actions may have direct consequences for an individual's interest in his work, his success, advancement, and responsibility. The study by Nias (1981) demonstrated that school factors (such as poor school administration) do affect job satisfaction of teachers, and she constructs another category of "negative satisfier" to indicate the lack of motivators that cause dissatisfaction. Methodological critique is also severe (Dunette, Campbell, and Hakel, 1967; Hinton, 1968; King, 1970; Schneider and Locke, 1971). For instance, Locke (1976) challenged the ambiguity of the classification system in Herzberg's study. In his review of Herzberg's schema, report by employee that the work is too easy or too hard is classified as "work itself" whereas the question of too much or too little work is regarded as "working conditions". If the worker is praised or criticized for his work, it is classified as "recognition", but if credit is given or withheld, it is classified as "supervision". Vroom (1964) also observed that Herzberg's results may be due to a process of defensiveness. In order to maintain their self-image, people take credit for the satisfying events that occur while blaming others for dissatisfying occurrences. These critiques would undermine though not totally abandon the plausibility of the

theoretical argument put forth in explaining the causes of job satisfaction.

Despite various formulations, a common problem in the need-satisfaction model has been articulated by Salancik & Pfeffer (1977). The most important critique is that the basic concept of needs is ambiguous under scrutiny:

> The definition of a need as ambiguous is, therefore, an advantage, because it permits use of the concept as an almost universal explanation for behaviour. From a scientific point of view, however, the fact that the concept of need is ambiguous on the points of the origins of needs, the development of needs, and even the meaning and measurement of needs makes the possibility of empirical refutation remote and the concept, in its present stage of development, of limited utility (Ibid, p.443).

Although researches applying human needs still prevail, the vagueness of the concept has directed effort to development of other theoretical candidates. In psychological studies, dispositional researches emerge in 80s as another current to account for job satisfaction. The next section is devoted to reviewing this theory.

Dispositional Approach

The essence of the approach is that individuals possess stable traits that significantly influence their affective and behavioral reactions to organizational settings. This line of research has its root in personality theories which fail to give promising results in past studies (Bernardin, 1977; Guion & Gottier, 1965; Schmitt, Gooding, Noe, & Kirsch, 1984; Weiss & Adler, 1984). The approach tries to restore the importance of personality variables in explaining attitudes and behaviour of individuals in organizations which is usually treated as residual category in other researches (Weiss & Adler, 1984). In addition, not all personality constructs gain the same weight in predicting attitudes and behaviour. Specifically, only those constructs which are affective in nature is investigated, and it has excluded other personological

dispositions such as aggressiveness and extroversion. A series of articles have been published to give support to the approach under this premise, and the theoretical as well as methodological orientations are analyzed below.

The first piece of research hinting on the approach came from Weitz (1952) who hypothesized that "a worker's stated sources of job dissatisfaction are more meaningful if we can get some idea about how satisfied he is in everyday life" (p.201). In other words, he was suggesting that general affective dispositions affects job satisfaction. In his research of tapping peoples' reaction to 44 stimuli common to everyday life such as television programs and the way people drive, he obtained a correlation between the disposition to these stimuli and job satisfaction was .39. From this Weitz argued that job satisfaction is related to one's disposition. The explanation is that some individuals will be expected to dislike any job because they are generally unhappy towards their lives and vice versa.

Pulakos and Schmitt (1983) conducted a longitudinal study for a two-year time period to test high school students' pre-employment expectations of satisfaction and their subsequent job attitudes. They argued that the temporal stability on their job satisfaction over time were explained by the reason that individuals who expected their job to be psychologically rewarding were in fact more likely to find it rewarding. In their own words, those students who have high "perceived instrumentalities", that is, they have strong belief that they would obtain needs from their work, would associate with high job satisfaction. The obtained correlations ranged from .13 to .28, which gave partial support to the explanation.

A typology of personality was suggested by Holland (1985) who maintained that all people belonged to one of the six basic personality types (realistic,

investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional). Vocational choice was then an expression of personality type. The most important study, however, came from Staw and Ross (1985), who explicitly posed the explanation of disposition to account for job satisfaction:

> Job attitudes may reflect a biologically based trait that predisposes individuals to see positive or negative content in their lives ... Differences in individual temperament, ... ranging from clinical depression to a very positive disposition, could influence the information individuals input, recall, and interpret within various social situations, including work (p.471).

The strategy used to substantiate their argument was that the dispositional effect were manifested through cross-situational and temporal stability in individual responses when the situational variables were controlled. Thus it led to three hypotheses in their study (p.472):

1. There will be a strong and significant relationship in individual attitudes over time.
2. There will be a strong and significant relationship in individual attitudes across situations.
3. Prior individual attitudes will be as strong a predictor of subsequent attitudes as important situational changes.

Re-analyzing a sample of people aged 45-64 from the National Longitudinal Survey of 1966, 1969 and 1971, they found partial confirmation to their hypotheses. They obtained moderate ($r=.44$, $p<.001$) correlation on the temporal stability, but the cross-situational correlation was low (4%) under different employer and occupation. The last hypothesis was confirmed in their study, but caution must be made that only two situational variables (pay and status) were controlled in their study. However, they made bold assertions from the study that "many situational interventions may be prone to failure because they must contend with attitudinal consistency or a tendency for individuals to revert back to their basic dispositions" (p.478).

Staw, Bell and Clausen (1986) further confirmed their hypotheses by analyzing the data base of the Longitudinal Studies conducted at Berkerly beginning in 1928, which enabled them to assess the temporal stability over a long period of time. Their research findings were supportive to their argument: a correlation of .34 ($p < .05$) was found between affective disposition assessed at ages 12 to 14 with the overall job satisfaction assessed at ages 54 to 62. They came to the conclusion that "in order to understand the origin and change of job attitudes, it may be useful to understand the background and development of the individuals under study" (p.272).

Although they could document the stability of dispositions over time, they asserted from their study that it was impossible to determine whether the affective dispositions were originated from genetic or social forces and how external factors might influence these affective states. Researches from the literature about genetic factors followed this line of inquiry to assert further the importance of influence from individualistic factors. Although studies relating individual dispositions to a variety of differences such as intelligence and attitudes were available (Rowe, 1987; Bouchard & McGue, 1981; Teasdale & Owen, 1984; Bouchard, 1984; Goldsmith, 1983; Telleen et al., 1988; Nichols, 1978; Martin et al., 1986), the most convincing piece of research was from Arvey et al. (1989). In a study of 34 monozygotic (identical) twin pairs it was found that they could account for 32% of variance in job satisfaction.

Dispositional approach is not without its critics (Blake & Pfeffer, 1989; Gerhart, 1987; Cropanzano and James, 1990; Judge, 1992; Judge and Locke, 1993; Judge and Hulin, 1993). As the critique of the approaches rests on their fundamental orientation, the focus is placed on the study by Staw and Ross (1985) only. Several

grounds support the idea that the research has included the core elements of the approach so that the relevancy of the critiques can be generalized to subsequent studies.

It is not surprising to find out that nearly all of the subsequent articles (whether they support or refute the argument) would refer to the study by Staw and Ross (1985). As reviewed above, they are the first ones who articulate the dispositional approach although there are prior studies pertaining to similar ideas (Weitz, 1952; Pulakos and Schmitt, 1983). Subsequent researches mainly dwell on their core ideas and replicate it by conducting researches on various sample of people (Staw and Ross, 1986; Arvey et al., 1989). In addition, the strategy of interweaving tightly the linkage between theoretical explanation and methodological argument in their piece of research has provided the model for subsequent studies. Put it simply, the demonstration of inferring the existence of a theoretical construct is accomplished by proving that there is a temporal stability. They explicitly pose three hypotheses (see above) and argued that the fulfilment of the first two hypotheses is sufficient to demonstrate the existence of a stable individual disposition, while the last one shows the relative importance of the factor. The mixing up of theory and method in their study can be reflected by describing their logic of argument in very simple words: disposition is equivalent to temporal stability. Since further investigations appear to accept the key assumption that "attitude stability across changing situation results from an individual's disposition or personality traits" (Gutek and Winter, 1992), tracing back the original study can unravel the fundamental drawbacks of the research design.

The critiques of Staw and Ross (1985) follow along two directions. First they

attempt to unravel the methodological inadequacies in their research design. Second, they challenge the ambiguity of the concept underlying the whole approach.

Staw and Ross (1985) argued that a set of invisible yet stable personality construct which they identified as disposition was operating to influence the level of job satisfaction one would experience across time. In the process of demonstrating this invisible construct, they had skipped the step of elaborating what is meant by disposition and jumped to find support from the research findings. The first two hypotheses of their study had reflected this rationale that there could be nothing but only the traits of a person which led to a temporal stability of the job attitudes of a person over time and across situations. The problem with this logic which stated that disposition is equivalent to correlation between job attitudes across time was subject to the trap of circular reasoning: the demonstration of the existence and effects of dispositions are both inferred from the same set of correlations (Blake and Pfeffer, 1989, p.392). On the one hand, temporal consistency is used to show that there is a set of "biologically based trait" operating behind the correlation. On the other hand, the same set of correlation is employed to describe the effect of the dispositions on maintaining the set of people to have a consistent level of job satisfaction.

Despite the possible remedy of responding to the criticism by separating the measurement of disposition and job satisfaction, the significance of the implication of the critique by Blake and Pfeffer lies beyond their specific claim. It is that there is only a fragile foundation which gives support to the interpretation of the research findings once the mechanism of freeing researchers from posing exactly what are the theoretical substances included in the concept of disposition is removed. The problems of constructing and measuring the dimensions of dispositions are enormous

and viewed as formidable barriers to further investigation.

Adherents of the approach were also aware of the drawbacks in due course of their researches. Dwelling on the implications of the results in the study of Staw and Ross (1985) to conclude that "many situational interventions may be prone to failure because they must contend with attitudinal consistency or a tendency for individuals to revert back to their basic dispositions" (p.478), they have nevertheless recognized the weak foundation of their research findings in later works:

> such consistency data [the findings of temporal and cross-situational stability in job attitudes] do not, however, constitute a dispositional theory of job attitudes, since they have little to say about why individuals may show stability in job satisfaction (Staw, Bell and Clausen, 1986, p.60).

The theoretical emptiness of the concept is clear from the inconsistency of their position over time. Unfortunately in later works they had not gone far in answering their own questions cited above.

To those researches who could free themselves from a circular argument, the hypothesis of demonstrating cross-situational consistency may not actually reveal that there is a kind of stable trait as there are many spurious variables uncontrolled in the study. Similar to the confound effect in experimental design, many organizational factors may be in operation during the time for the two tests but not reflected due to inadequate or imprecise measurement. Thus this type of error is confounded to the explanation of using traits to indicate the source of consistency. For instance, Gerhart (1987) conducted a sample of 12,686 men and women aging from 14 to 21 using the same methodology by Staw and Ross (1985) to show that situational factors (such as pay and occupational status) had impact on the level job satisfaction over time. He concluded that "to the extent that important situational variables are

omitted or poorly measured, the relative predictive power of previous job satisfaction will appear greater. ... Instead any unexplained stability in job satisfaction was attributed to unspecified traits" (p.371).

Even when one is able to control all possible spurious factors, it is still unable to avoid errors inferring from cross-situational consistency arises from response-shift bias (Gutek and Winter, 1992) which is defined as "a change in internalized standards or frame of reference" (p.62). The idea is that when a person changes from one job to another, this experience may lead him to change the conception of what is satisfactory or what makes him conceive as "average" satisfaction. Therefore when they are asked about the level of satisfaction, this effect may lead him to rate the same level as that of first test. The effect arising from such change of frame of reference, however, may not be figured out and thus it is attributed to the disposition. In this case, even the design of an actual control experiment is incapable of having unbiased estimates of the treatment effect. Gutek and Winter used a sample of 1355 respondents to test the possible effect of response-shift bias and found that the original job attitude consistency was spurious when the latter was taken into account. From this study they argued that it was a threat to the validity to the research design of longitudinal studies.

Critique on the Conception of Man

The previous discussion centres on criticizing the substantive arguments on the formulation of needs and dispositions in a person among the different approaches. The critique in this section, however, goes beyond substantive arguments and question their image of man implicit in these approaches.

The two approaches discussed above share the same conception of man. While on the surface, the needs-satisfaction model postulates an active image of man in making decisions consistent with the extent to which choice alternatives satisfy or do not satisfy their preferences, it has in fact denied a person any freedom to behave because implicitly the motivation to satisfy one's needs serves as an inevitable determinants of action. It has pre-determined whether he/she will be satisfied or not according to the level of needs being fulfilled in the universal hierarchy set by Maslow. Similarly, the theory of Herzberg implies that those work stripped of the nature of being self-actualizing are doomed to elicit frustrations from workers.

The dispositional approach puts an even forceful argument in that the disposition inherited in a person has determined subsequently the affection experienced over various work settings and across different time period. The effect from the workplace has been reduced to a minimal level in face of the relatively stable personality of a person.

Basically, the two approaches resemble the stimuli-response model devoted by B.F. Skinner, the father of behaviourist school in psychology. He projects the behaviours of people as reacting merely to the external environment without going through the process of interpreting the stimuli. From a sociological perspective, however, there exists a blackbox in the process and understanding the mechanism can avoid making over-simplified judgements.

Although there exist a variety of approaches in the discipline of sociology, the present study will focus on symbolic interactionism and Weberian sociology which project a more active image of man. True to say that they should be seen as fulfilling rather different visions in sociology enterprise, they are nevertheless sharing a great

portion of similarity on the nature of Man, action and anti-positivistic research directions.

In their views, the unique characteristic of Man over other species lies on the interpretative nature. The concept of *Verstehen* put forth by Weber requires us to investigate the intended meaning of the actor in accounting his/her course of action. Mead argues that the development of self is a resultant of the interplay between the impulsive tendency of the "I" and the shared expectations of "Me". Hence "the individual with a self is thereby enabled to direct and control his behaviour. Instead of being subject to all impulses and stimuli directly playing upon him, the individual can check, guide, and organize his behaviour. He is, then, not a mere passive agent" (Meltzer, 1970, p.12-13). The idea conveyed by the two approaches is the same: an actor is the creator of meaning and action.

With regard to the nature of action, Weber maintains that understanding of the creation of a specific meaning should be sought in its social context. In explicating the concept of social action, which is one of the fundamental concepts to Weber's sociology, he writes, "action is social in so far as, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals), it takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby orientated in its course" (Weber, 1947 in R. King, 1982, p.8). The concept of "Me" in interactionist approach has also suggested the influence of societal expectations on the process of interpretation made by an actor.

As a result, their research directions are completely different from previous researches found in psychological studies. The implications of the concept *Verstehen* in Weberian sociology have required sociologists to "go through a process of re-socialization into his subjects' social world, that is, their commonsense constructs and

experience" (Leat, 1972 in King, 1982, p.8). The point of capturing the interpretation process of the subjects as a methodological foundation of research design has been echoed by Blumer, a contemporary sociologist and a proponent of symbolic interactionism. In view of the flourishing development and application of quantitative researches, he has dissected long ago in a paper on the limitations of variable analysis as failing to include the process of interpretation and concealing the actual complex operations in human group life (Blumer, 1956). All these arguments point to the use of qualitative methods as the research methodology.[3]

The above analysis suggests that in psychological studies there lacks researches on two areas. On one hand, the interpretative process of the actor in eliciting certain kinds of actions and feelings are overlooked. On the other hand, the social context in which the formation of the social action and process of interpretation is embedded also requires adequate conceptualization. With the disenchantment of the social class background as the overwhelming factor (Coleman et al., 1966; Jencks et. al., 1972) and the increasing importance of school as a significant workplace environment since late 70s (Cohen, 1987) over student performance, two concepts in recent studies of sociology of education are employed here as analytical tools to theorize the process, and they will be discussed in detail in the next section.

[3] There are also studies adopting such approaches in the literature of sociology of education. While Woods (1983) adheres to the interactionist approach and King (1983) to the action approach, the core of their assumptions with regard to the present discussion, however, is the same.

The Efficacy of Teachers

The concept was first employed in two Rand Corporation evaluation studies. Berman and McLaughlin (1977) found that teachers' sense of efficacy was positively related to the percentage of project goals achieved, amount of teacher change, continuation of both project methods and materials, and improved student performance. Armor et al. (1976) in their evaluation of the effectiveness of the School Preferred Reading Program in Los Angeles reported that the greater teachers' sense of efficacy, the more their students advanced in reading achievement. Researchers in both studies defined the concept as "the extent to which the teacher believed he or she had the capacity to affect student performance", and it was measured by the score from two Likert-scale items:

1. When it comes right down to it, a teachers really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment.
2. If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students (Bermann et al., 1977, pp.136-137).

At the same time, other studies related to similar idea were carried out (Brookover et al., 1978; Brophy and Evertson, 1977; Brophy, 1979; Ashton and Webb, 1982).

The theoretical foundation of these studies, as Dembo and Gibson (1985) articulated explicitly, pertained to the theory of self-efficacy by Bandura (1977). Dembo and Gibson (1985) considered the relevant idea in the work of Bandura in that "[he] hypothesizes that through life experiences persons develop a generalized expectancy about action-outcomes contingencies, as well as a more specific belief in their own coping abilities, or self-efficacy" (p.174). Elsewhere he defined the concept as "people's judgement of their capabilities to organize and execute courses

of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986, p.391). In developing the idea he made a distinction between general outcome expectancy, the belief that behaviour will lead to desirable outcomes, from that of self-efficacy, the belief that one has the requisite skills to bring about the outcome. The analytical distinction was coincident with the two items in the Rand studies, the first one measuring the general outcome expectancy while the second one asking about self-efficacy. They were further substantiated and refined by Gibson and Dembo (1984) in their factor analysis of responses from 208 elementary school teachers.

The significance of the distinction was pinpointed in the studies of Ashton et al. (1983) and Ashton and Webb (1986). They argued that low teaching efficacy, that is, the efficacy of teaching student as a whole, produced little dissatisfaction since the teacher was likely to believe that all teachers were unable to do much to motivate certain students. In the case of personal teaching efficacy, however, they found that low efficacy of this type was likely to produce high stress, guilt, and/or shame. As the purpose of the present study is to explore the factors leading to the satisfaction of individual teachers, the concept of efficacy is restricted to personal teaching efficacy which is distinguished from the teaching efficacy of the profession as a whole.[4]

Although previous studies (see Fuller et al., 1982; Dembo and Gibson, 1985; Rosenholtz, 1988 Newmann et al, 1989) had different definitions of the concept, the work by Ashton and Webb (1986) was considered as a landmark on the field of study.

[4] Hereafter, the concept of efficacy refers to that of personal teaching efficacy unless otherwise stated.

Deriving from the work of Bandura and Rand Corporation studies, they used both quantitative and qualitative data to demonstrate the effect of personal teaching efficacy on improving the academic standards of students. The present study will follow their definitions in conceptualizing the efficacy of teachers. They defined the concept in general as "teachers' situation-specific expectation that they can help students learn" (p.3), upon which the "sense of teaching efficacy" and "sense of personal teaching efficacy" are then distinguished. The latter construct, which is relevant to the study here, refers to individuals' assessment of their own teaching competence.

Before revising the current application of the concept, several features deserve attention, which differentiate it from other concepts. First, the concept is an expectancy construct involving self-referent beliefs. It is contrasted to the other concepts such as outcome expectancy in which beliefs on action and outcome do not include the beliefs held by actors that they are actually capable of performing an action leading to a specific sets of outcome. Secondly, the concept implies that it is not merely the successful performance that secures behavioral changes. Rather, the conviction of personal competence and attribution of outcome to his/her effort is more important in evaluating one's subsequent motivation and behaviours. Lastly, the situation-specific determinant of the concept rejects the views of treating it as a global personality trait which persists over time and situations. The concept hence directs us to investigate the context upon which it arises.

The relationship with student achievement was the original concern upon which the concept was developed. In this study, the concept was used to account for the satisfaction of teachers instead of the academic performance of students. The shifting application of the concept, however, was not without any grounds. An

analysis of the concept of efficacy had already taken into account its effect on the affective as well as the behavioral aspect of an actor. It was a concept pertaining to the cognitive dimension which would have impact on the affective dimension of an actor such as the level of satisfaction (Raudenbush et al., 1992). Ashton and Webb (1986) put forth the relation clearly in their studies:

> Teachers' general satisfaction with teaching was expected to have a reciprocal relationship with their sense of efficacy. If teachers doubt their competence as teachers, it is unlikely that they will be satisfied with their chosen profession. Similarly, if teachers are dissatisfied with teaching, they may come to question their profession competence (p.95).

The rationale behind such formulation was that successful performance of the job based upon the unique contribution of an actor would elicit sense of satisfaction.

Shifting the focus from academic achievement to job satisfaction sheds light on the possible application of the concept of efficacy to other areas of study. Since satisfaction is linked with other important affective and behavioral variables such as absenteeism, turnover and psychological withdrawal from the job, detailed scrutiny on the concept helps re-examine the problematic of traditional organizational behaviour when the interpretation of actors is involved.

Hargreaves (1972) conceptualized broadly the role of a teacher into two aspects: the sub-role of instruction and discipline. Though they are interrelated and cannot be distinguished in any systematic ways in reality, it does offer us with a simple yet comprehensive idea on the role of a teacher. The majority of researches on schools tends to stress on the former dimension, that is, on the causes and effects of teacher instruction to student results. In studies on efficacy of teachers, the trend is made more obvious as the empirical issue of the concept came from the problem of how to enhance the academic achievement of students. The stream of studies was

identified as the "school effectiveness researches". Hence the aspect concerning the discipline of students is neglected.

Theoretically speaking, job satisfaction can be derived from both aspects of a teacher's role. The current emphasis on its relation to instruction of students researches tend to convey an implication that successful discipline of students is to be taken for granted. True as to say that teachers who find themselves completely out of control in classrooms are bound to leave the school, it should not mean that the process of keeping the class in control itself does not generate job satisfaction for teachers. The relevancy to the present discussion is that the concept of efficacy should not be confined to the instruction of students alone. The **"efficacy of instructing students"** should be delineated conceptually from the **"efficacy of disciplining students"**.

The case is revealed clearly in schools where most of the students have lower academic ability. Facing such situations, teachers have to put more than double efforts to implement their work:

> Compared to average or above-average pupils, low-achieving students are more difficult to manage, more likely to show anger, and more likely to direct their anger at their classmates and the teachers. They are unlikely to work hard or show interest in class activities or assignment. Teachers must struggle to win their trust and friendship, and help reluctant learners master academic material generally in an arduous affair (Ashton and Webb, 1986, p.66).

Teachers in these schools reveal that even the maintenance of successful classroom control requires them to invest huge effort before transmission of knowledge can be taken place. Ashton and Webb (1986) have differentiated teachers with high efficacy from those of low efficacy in the following aspects: relationships with students, classroom management strategies, and instructional methods. Such

division, however, has given readers an impression that teachers with high efficacy are managed to have good relationships with students, more successful classroom management and better instruction to students together. In the discussion, successful discipline and instruction work hand in hand in the work of a teacher. If the above critique on researches of efficacy is valid, then we should be cautious of the close linkage in the two sub-roles of a teacher. The two concepts thus enable us to inquire into how teachers may derive satisfaction from each aspect without necessarily implying satisfaction to the other one.

Thus the overwhelming concern of academic achievement of students underlying the concept of efficacy should be liberated. Taking into account the other half of teachers' work -- to maintain order in the classroom -- tends to dissociate it from the role of instruction, hence providing the possibility of inquiring how the efficacy of teachers leads to job satisfaction in each aspect.

By far we have been able to take into account the interpretative process of an actor in feeling satisfaction with the job. In delineating the concept of efficacy from instruction to one including discipline, it has already highlighted the effect of the social context in shaping the sense of efficacy of teachers. What is important and requires efficacy is not intrinsic to the job: it is influenced by some significant others who have a collective definition emerging from the work. Hence the following element is introduced to theorize this kind of influence.

The Culture of Teachers

Conventional association of the "culture" of teachers in a school would be about the basic norms and values shared by them. Teachers in due course of their work share a similar perspective on common problems and a set of values and norms guiding appropriate behaviours are then evolved. Regular and patterned interactions among teachers over time resulted in the consolidation of a culture over and above individual teachers, and they perform the task of guiding actions to members sharing the culture in a taken-for-granted manner.

The task of deciphering the culture, or the shared meanings among teachers is indispensable to understanding why a teacher feels and acts in their daily lives. The origin of such culture, of course, is diverse in nature and context-bounded. Development of the society in past decades, changes in educational policies and reformations in school policies all act as powerful forces in shaping the particular culture in each school. Generally speaking, the culture of teachers functions to provide meanings to newcomers through the interpretations to the surrounding environment around them. The most immediate environment requiring constant interpretation comes from the school policies which have direct impact on their works of teaching. Hence an inquiry into the interpretations made by teachers on the school policies contributes much to the content of the culture.

The literature from sociology of education, however, has attached another component to the investigation of the culture of teaching. Instead of concentrating on its content, the form of the culture should be given equivalent weight as it shapes partially the content of the culture. The form of culture can be seen as a structure which limits the amount and nature of interactions among teachers, as Andy

Hargreaves (1994) puts it:

> The form of teacher cultures consists of the characteristic patterns of relationship and forms of association between member of those cultures. ... It is through the form of teacher culture that the contents of those different cultures realized, reproduced and re-defined (p.166).

Lortie (1975) was the leading scholar who portrayed the culture of teachers in any systematic manner. He found that teachers shared a culture of "individualism" or "norm of autonomy". The phase of "live and let live" has vividly indicated how teachers tried to work independently without interfering with the job of other colleagues. Formation of this culture were twofold. The structural constraints of teaching in an egg-cracked classroom setting confined teachers to have the opportunity of shared work. In addition, teachers were reluctant to adopt other policies which might lead to any disturbances of the precarious order they had set up tediously in classrooms by trial and error. The critique of individualism was followed by David Hargreaves (1980) that the cult of individualism had invaded into the sphere of teaching which deprived the chance of mutual learning and improvement of teachers. Rosenholtz (1988) also asserted the uncertainty and anxiety of teachers as reasons that made them prefer to work in isolated settings.

A contrast could be seen with the praise of the culture of collaboration (or collegiality that is used interchangeably by scholars) among teachers. Little (1982) concluded from his one-year study in six urban, desegregated schools that those schools which possessed a norm of collegiality were more adaptable and successful than those which lacked such characters. Specifically, the norm of collegiality consisted of the following dimensions: that teachers frequently talk about teaching practice, they observe and provide useful critiques of teaching, they plan and prepare teaching materials together, and they teach each other about the practice of teaching.

In tracing the social organization that gave rise to the efficacy of teachers, Ashton and Webb (1986) argued that the degree of joint work among teachers acted to differentiate the efficacious teachers from the frustrated ones. Rosenholtz (1985, 1988) gave support to the idea in her study of Australian schools. She concluded that schools having a "routine sharing culture", that is, which developed a culture of sharing responsibility and discussion among teachers on curriculum planning and instruction received more satisfaction and higher academic standards of students. Nias et al. (1989) studied how teachers came to develop a culture of collaboration among teachers and the norms perceived.

The above profile, however, masks the complexities and intricacies behind the seemingly distinct forms of culture. The crude concepts must be refined if it is to capture in a more realistic way the form of culture in a school. Briefly three components can be delineated, which are the degree, scope and nature of collaboration.

With regard to the first component, a comprehensive treatment has been reviewed by Little (1990) under scrutiny. Stripping off the value judgement on the two cultures above, he suggested that the two forms of cultures were not as mutually exclusive as it appeared. There is a continuum of relationships ranging from "weak" ties to "strong" ties among colleagues. At one extreme is the ideal type of "storytelling" in which contacts among teachers are opportunistic. The exchange of information and stories are made distant from the classroom. Instead of abolishing the culture of individualism, this type of collaboration even reinforce and perpetuate it. In his own words,

> A school's staff may be described as "close", offering large doses of camaraderie, sympathy, and moral support, but the texture of collegial relations is woven principally of social and interpersonal interests. Teacher autonomy rests on freedom from scrutiny and the largely unexamined right to exercise personal preference; teachers acknowledge and tolerate the individual preference of others. Independent trial and error serves as the principal route to competence. *In all these ways, the modal conception of collegiality is both characteristic and reinforcing of a culture of individualism, presentism, and conservatism* (p.315, italics added).

"Aid and assistance" represent a step over the former type in that colleagues would give help and advice when asked. Nonetheless, there are reservations in giving advice because it is linked to the judgements of their competency. Hence the privacy of teaching remains unchallenged. "Sharing" is another type of culture focusing on the routine sharing of materials and methods or open exchange of ideas and opinions. Considered as a fruitful type of sharing among teachers, Little nevertheless remarks in this type that "even in the most collaborative of the schools, sharing does not extend to direct commentary on curriculum and instruction" (p.320-321). The hidden cost of sharing expertise such as additional planning and preparation by teachers might hinder them from changing the well-established routine of teaching.

Little considered that real collaboration existed only in the last item of his typology, the joint work. He defined it as the "shared responsibility for the work of teaching, collective conceptions of autonomy, support for teachers' initiative and leadership with regard to professional practice, and group affiliations grounded in professional work" (p.321). Through the support of school organization in fostering cooperation among teachers on various tasks, it is only under this type of collegiality that the characteristics of "individualism" such as classroom privacy and autonomy can be abolished.

The foregoing discussion suggests that the culture of individualism and

collegiality are not always mutually exclusive: most of the time they coexist and operate at different levels. The existence of various degree of collaboration, and some of which is reinforcing the culture of individualism, represents a complex constellation of communication networks regulating and constraining various contents shared by teachers. Hence it becomes comprehensible that on one hand most of the teachers share some knowledge on certain "basic" issues regarding their teaching activities, while on the other hand they found themselves inhibiting in a "swim or sink" culture on some issues especially those involving instructional strategies in classroom. Every teacher has a set of norms ranging from those shared by all teachers to some which is constrained only to the particular classes taught. They are to a large extent structured by the form of culture discussed above.

The second component, the scope of collaboration, points to the possible over-simplification of treating teachers in a school as a unit. Certainly it is possible to have a united staff team, but more oftenly the culture of collaboration appears in the form of a small group of teacher or even in a one-to-one association. Hence it is possible to have great variations among the level of support received by teachers within a school given the flexible scope of collaboration in the same work setting.

The last component concerns the nature of collaboration. The term has been associated with much ideological sanguine since the introduction by Little (1982). The meaning of collaboration, which has been neglected in previous researches, is made problematic under the light of micropolitical perspective. Cooper questioned about the possible case of "receiving" a culture from other agents, and Andy Hargreaves (1994) put the issue more explicitly:

> In these cases, collegiality is either an unwanted managerial imposition from the point of view of teachers subjected to it, or more usually, a way of coopting teachers fulfilling administrative purposes and the implementation of external mandates (p.190).

He draws a distinction of cultures as collaborative culture and contrived collegiality. Characteristics of the former one include the spontaneous organization being supported by other parties, voluntary admission and enforcement of practices, having development-oriented vision of the practices, unpredictable in its origin and development, and the pervasiveness across time and space. In contrast, features of the latter culture include the compulsory nature of the practices, being administratively regulated, implementation-oriented, predictability and the fixation of time and space. These two ideal types enable us to examine different natures of practices collectively practised by teachers, and the contrasting orientation of teachers on them.

Hence various degree, scope and nature of forms of cultures can influence the contents of the culture shared by teachers, their group dynamics and the resulting differences in their perceptions of help and assistance from colleagues.

A brief summary

The present chapter has recasted the theoretical orientation of job satisfaction studies to a sociological perspective. It in turn leads to a fundamentally different research strategy, kind of data required and the ways they are organized.

The above critique has reinstated the active side of an actor in a portrait where one is able to interpret, make and plan decision based upon the actions of other actors. In this picture two features are highlighted to differentiate similar approaches claiming to stress the active image of actor but theorizing it in an atomistic way.

First, the claim that an actor is aware of the possible impact from the work environment has implied that the latter must be clearly spelt out in order that a more accurate interpretation can be drawn. In contrast, psychological studies tend to de-contextualize the work environment. Partly it is because their theoretical formulation does not pave the space for them to incorporate this aspect of uniqueness: the needs and dispositions are rather universal and persist over time, anyway. The logic is that if the prime cause of deriving satisfaction rests on some inner psychological forces, then the surroundings can be theorized at best as intervening marginally in these forces. Partly it is due to the methodology they adopt: the use of survey as the main research design. Variable analysis has the advantage of delineating clearly the pre-set factors so that causal relations can be drawn. The cost that the method has to bear, then, is to forfeit the context upon which the actions occur.

The present perspective, however, attempts to bring out the importance of the work environment. The above analysis has suggested that the meaning of actions can be interpreted with higher accuracy only when it is embedded in their context; otherwise we cannot comprehend why certain actions are carried out by some actors but not others. In relation to this research, a proper understanding of the feelings and actions of teachers should be sought by embedding them in a school context. It is through a reconstruction of the school's historical development that the present school situation can be understood.

In view of the necessity to depict the historical development of the school, chapter 3 is devoted to making readers familiar with its social environment. Its interface with the wider societal development is touched upon, and the impact of the latter to the school is described.

The second feature deserving attention in the present approach is that actors are constantly receiving, interpreting and creating meanings from their interaction with others. It should be stressed once more that the interpretation process is not to be conceived as purely individualistic and private; it is mediated through a collectivity upon which meanings are transmitted and perpetuated. The use of survey design by psychological studies thus falls short of articulating this process.

In order to capture how the creation of meanings are mediated through the reference group, chapters 4 and 5 are organized in a way where the school policies are interpreted by teachers and how this affects their work in classrooms. In asserting that the policies laid down by school authority has a powerful impact on the work of teachers, at the same time the potential strength arising from the culture of teachers shared should not be overlooked. How these two forces influence the feelings and actions of the host behind the classroom doors are the primary concern of the two chapters.

CHAPTER 3

The Social Environment of the School

When the Community Secondary School (hereafter abbreviated as CSS)[5] opened in 1965, it was one of the three schools in the District. Financed by a Catholic association, the principal was initially assigned to a Brother. The majority of students are boys with some girls only at higher forms.

The school is situated remotely from public estates in the district and the railway station. After taking a bus, one has to take a few minutes' walk before arriving the school. Buildings surrounding the school are either villages or small grocery stores.

Being far from business district, the school has a large campus. The main part is occupied by a huge football field. Behind it is a three-storey building where all administrative and teaching rooms are located. A large portion of the ground floor is used for the canteen. Adjacent to it is a Form 6 classroom, a PE staffroom and a counselling room. The next two floors are divided into two halves by a stairway. The general office within it and the principal office are situated next to the stairway in the second floor. The staffroom is separated from the general office by several classrooms. The staffroom at the third floor is next to the stairway, and the rooms besides it are the chemistry and physics laboratory. The laboratories are being used

[5] The name of the school and all teachers are fictional to protect the anonymity of subjects.

for all types of staff meetings because of a lack of any conference rooms. The remaining half of the third floor consists of classrooms.

Due to insufficient spaces, the hall has been partitioned for other purposes. While the upper part of it has been redesigned as a classroom, the lower part is reserved for all types of examinations and extra-curricular activities. At both sides of the walls there are some out-dated magazines and books which form the school's "library". The area besides the hall consists of some table-tennis tables and an open area is covered with zinc which is designed as a classroom mainly for art lessons.

At present, part of the football field had been partitioned for another building which would accommodate more classrooms and special rooms. The application had been submitted to the government in mid-70s, but the project was postponed until this year. Upon completion of the extension project, additional Form One classes would be admitted.

A first glance of the physical environment may suggest that the school is not a very good place for teaching. Despite a large campus and an attractive football field, CSS has inadequate spaces for academic activities and administrative purposes. The poor facilities further limit the development of teaching skills by teachers. From talks with teachers in the school, however, it does not constitute the most important factor in the evaluation of workplace environment. The social environment which is comprised of the characteristics of different types of people as well as the interactions among them, is given heavier weight.

In this attempt of documenting the changes in the social environment of the school in the past three decades, caution is made that changes in school development are inseparable to the ecology of societal development. The school is located in a

web of networks in which many changes can be seen as adapting to its larger environment. Educational policies act as powerful constraints which can shape the type of problems and resources faced by schools. The effects of these policies, however, are mediated by district differences, and it forms another factor in influencing the development of the school.

Under a spectrum of perspectives from the principal, students and teachers, the views of the latter are examined in order to understand more fully the rationale of their actions. It is because their interpretations of the environment significantly affect the meaning constructed in their daily work, and it in turns leads to a specific course of actions in the classroom. As the construction of the meaning of teachers cannot be abstracted from the context, the following account is portrayed through the reconstruction of the interpretations of teachers.

The Nature of Students

No matter how much additional work a teacher may have, the main clients of his job are students in the classroom. A glance of the timetable of a teacher reveals that about half of his working time is devoted to classroom teaching, and in free lessons they are busy in correcting books and preparing for subsequent classes. Therefore the characteristics of students have a direct impact on the work of teachers.

Beyond individual characteristic of each student, there are common attributes found in most of the students due to a selective intaking process arranged under the educational policies in Hong Kong. The intake of students, then, cannot be divorced from the environment of the school, ranging from socio-economic changes of the society to specific changes in the educational system. Under the present system,

students are allocated and arranged with differential "quality", and school are striving to bid for the best ones. All schools are trying to maintain a position of admitting students with higher academic achievement, but it may not always be successful. The school in this study is a case in point. Originally taking the best portion of students in the district, it is now classified as a band five school in which students have acute academic and discipline problems. The declining standard of students is considered by teachers as the prime cause of this series of changes. Being unable to change the situation, CSS has tried its best to adapt to it in order to mitigate the adverse effects.

At the time when the school was founded, the number of students was small compared with other schools. It had only nine classes, which was comprised of three forms, each of which had three classes. In total the number of students were around three hundred. At mid 1970s, the number of classes grew to 15 with the admission of three classes of Form four and Form five students. A Form six class for Higher Level became available in 1980s. With the abolishment of the examination, Form six and seven classes for Advanced Level were offered since last year. Currently the number of classes are expanded to 17.

The increase in the number of students in itself did not pose problems for teachers. Actually they considered no serious problems in teaching students before mid-80s. The situation had worsened drastically onwards in which they found themselves teaching a group of both academically and behaviourally problematic students.

In Hong Kong, the period before the abolishment of Secondary School Entrance Examination was still a system of elitist education. The test taken in primary six was able to screen out most of the academically poor students such that

the remaining ones, who were able to continue their secondary education, would have comparatively less problems. Together with the limited number of schools in the district, CSS was able to absorb the best portion of students. The primary concern of teachers at that time was on improving their academic results:

> In the past we need not take care of the classroom order of students. You just go in and make a shout, and basically all students will be very quiet. You concentrate on their academic aspect, to make them absorb what you teach with the hope that they can get good results in public exams. We stress on this aspect only. (Peter, p.3 ln.17 to 20[6])

The introduction of nine-year compulsory education in 1978, which differentiated students into five groups and allocated them to schools according to their academic ability and choices of parents, marked the beginning of a series of changes to the school. Under this policy those students previous banned from further education were now able to enter secondary schools. As a result, the quality of students became much more varied. Additional schools were built in the district and most of them were located near the railway station and public estates in order to accommodate the increasing number of students. Being newly built, they had better facilities and equipment when compared with CSS. The geographical location and teaching facilities were considered by teachers as factors in affecting the choice of parents in sending their students to study in secondary school.

> [the reason is] the development of new town along the railway stations. We can see that it has significant effect on the allocation of students in the whole district. The most important reason is the location of the school. After the development of new towns and the railway line, we can see that the standards of students in all schools far away from the railway station are lowered, and those schools adjacent to railway stations have absorbed students of higher banding. (Stephen, p.4, ln.21-27)

[6] The page and line number refers to the location of transtranscription in each interviewed teacher.

Gradually, the school admitted more and more students with lower banding in Form 1. A chain effect was in effect, which affected student intake in higher forms. In each school there is a fixed percentage of allocating students who could continue to study Form 4 from the own school, and the basis is linked to its banding. Hence the lowering banding of student intake in Form 1 has resulted in lowering the percentage of student intake into Form 4. As a result, the vacancies were left to students rejected by other schools. Teachers in CSS complained that it created a serious problem to the school:

> We have students whose results are not so bad, but they cannot study in Form 4 because they have low banding when they enter the school. This year the situation is even worse; some have an average of 60 marks but they cannot study in Form four. Students who are assigned to study here have 20 marks only. ... In this situation, we have another break -- Form 1 to Form 3; Form 4 to Form 5. We have a group of bad students who causes lots of problems in both of their discipline and academic standards. (Abraham, p.5, ln.20 to 23; ln.29 to 31)

The perceived inequality of the system in the eyes of teachers is that some students who could obtain good grades in Form 3 in CSS were barred from further studies due to the limited quota of admitting Form 4 students from its own school. Those vacancies are then left to students who are rejected by schools with higher banding than CSS. As a result a band five school is forced to admit some students who are academically poorer than those from its own school due to the quota allocation system.

The deteriorating standard of students resulted in great burden to teachers. Those taught for many years found themselves problematic in coping with the trend. Some teachers, especially the beginners, became so difficult in maintaining classroom order that they chose to leave.

The school context of instruction and discipline will be discussed in the next

two chapters. For the moment we turn to have a look on another important aspect of the school, the relations among colleagues.

Collegial Relations

A short stay in CSS will suffice one to sense the atmosphere of warmth and care dispersed among the staff. Chats and jokes among them after meetings are impressive to newcomers, and talks with teachers having experience there for over ten years often reflect plentiful golden memories with colleagues. Most of them ascribe the atmosphere to a kind of "tradition" peculiar to the school.

Due to the intake of students, the size of the staff team in early years of the school revolved around 12 to 13 who were all situated in the staffroom in the third floor. Together with the isolated geographical location of the school, they provided fertile grounds for teachers to develop a sense of solidarity and friendship:

> The surrounding places [of the school] were fields for farming. The district was not as prosperous as it is now, and there were only small towns. In addition, we had lunch together in school. We had it in the staffroom because it was comparatively larger for the number of staffs at that time. ... The lunch was ordered from outside. So we could have lunch together everyday, and naturally good relationships were built up. At times of vacations or the day before, we had activities such as BBQ or playing sports. ... I felt that there was good rapport among colleagues in this school along the time. (Paul, p.4, ln. 6-23)

Taken together the unique factors contributed to the formation of a group of teachers with strong cohesion. The association was further strengthened as there were rare conflicts and cliques among teachers concerning their relations such as promotion. They served as a powerful force which could centrifuge teachers from leaving. Experienced teachers here are often proud of the relatively small turnover and the long years of teaching in CSS: two staffs had been teaching since late 60s

and a couple of them taught here since early 70s. Turnover becomes an issue, according to their interpretation, only in late 80s when some of the teachers decided to emigrate due to the losing confidence on the future of Hong Kong.

The solidarity of the team was revealed further in case of conflicts concerning with teachers as a unit. The following incident shows how teachers were ready to unite and fight for their side:

> There was an unhappy incident concerning the principal at that time. I had thought of leaving but fortunately the colleagues cooperated together [to fight for the incident] and the principal had to leave at last. I did not want to mention the incident in detail because the acts of the principal at that time was very irritating. ... The colleagues felt very resentful and the incident was related to many other questions. At that time I was still young and considered leaving here as "no big deal". I could find another job elsewhere; so I determined to stand on the side of justice. As a result we won the battle over the association governing the school and the principal was transferred to another school. (Stephen, p.2, ln.9-16)

The "tradition" of cohesion seemed to persist for three decades. Although the number of staff at present has risen to 31 teachers, teachers still consider the team as relatively small in size and count it as an advantage to the maintenance of a harmonious atmosphere because it facilitates frequent interactions among teachers.

> Q: Please comment on your relations with colleagues here.
> T: It is quite good because firstly, it does not resemble some places where colleagues are calculative. They are willing to help when you need so. In addition, it may be due to the small staff here. At times of discussing issues, we can just meet and talk over to those two or three colleagues. After that we are able to make decisions. That means it is more efficient in handling school matters. (Timothy, p.25, ln.1-8)

> Q: How would you characterize the relations with other teachers here?
> L: It can be said as good. ... I feel that because there are not many teachers so there are more opportunities to talk with each other. And since the staffroom is quite crowded, it is natural to have more chance to contact and chat with one another. (Luther, p.11, ln.1-6)

The sedimentation of the affection through the daily lives leads to the

development of a sense of "belonging to a family" with other colleagues.[7] Another characteristic of this atmosphere is that experienced teachers do not insulate themselves from new members. Instead they are ready to give support verbally or in action when they notice that novice teachers are having problems. The experience by new teachers reflects the sense of care and support in times of help:

> I have been in this school for a short time only, so I do not have in depth understanding with other teachers. ... But at some time I can feel the verbal support from colleagues. Because they know I have to teach the classes which is so bad, they would encourage me to keep on, to give some verbal support or sometimes try to give assistance. (Treasa, first year in CSS, p.8, ln.1-12)

> I do not expect it at the beginning when I taught here. To speak frankly, I have a fear of a generation gap with other teachers as they are all very experienced and have taught here for many years. But it turns out that they treat you very well. Really very well. They are meant to help you. If you cannot handle the work, they would give you materials. ... Sometimes you need not bother altogether; a couple of them will handle it for you. For instance when some teachers who walk along the corridor saw naughty students making me angry, they would catch those students and get them scolded. You do not need to handle it at all. (Margret, second year in CSS, p.2, ln.24 to p.3 ln.3)

It is not difficult to find out from the talks in the staffroom that the major topic of their interaction revolves around the affairs in the classrooms as they constitute the common problem and concern for teachers which demands continual discussions. The topic next to student affairs is on their personal lives.[8] They serve as the content of daily interaction in which teachers share a common problem and understanding of the background of teachers can be enhanced.

The analysis so far portrays the relations of colleagues as harmonious and

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[7] According to the survey conducted in January, 11 out of 15 teachers indicate agreement on the opinion that "Do you have a feeling of belonging to a family here with other colleagues?" (refer to Q.21 in Appendix II)

[8] The survey reveals that 13 out of 15 teachers have frequent sharing on their stresses and out of 15 on personal lives. (refer to Q.22 in Appendix II)

without any cliques. The absence of conflicts, however, should not lead us to conclude that groups are not formed among teachers based upon some criteria. The degree of collegiality is not found equally in all teachers. Teachers have differential degree of familiarity with colleagues, and they learn the norms and values from specific reference groups among the staff team. These phenomena have to be taken into account in order to figure out the culture of teachers in a more realistic way. Staffroom in this school serves as a context upon which different sets of norms and values are acquired and support sought in times of help.

Staffroom Differences

It has been mentioned above that originally all teachers were accommodated at the staffroom at the third floor. With the appointment of new teachers, the existing staffroom became over-crowded. At the year when the number of staff reached about 26 to 27, another staffroom was set up at the second floor. Teachers were free to choose which staffroom they wanted to work in. The separation arising from physical setting, however, had created subcultural differences among the two staffrooms.

> There is less communication [to teachers in the second floor] because it is constrained physically. You have to go downstairs only when you have the need to talk to someone, and casual chatting is inconvenient. In addition, the staffs in the second floor are quite similar in that they all teach Chinese or Chinese History. It turns out that their views are somewhat divergent from ours. But we would tolerate the situation because everyone has its own values. It is OK in so far as there is no problem in cooperation. (Barnabas, third floor, p.2, ln.18-24)

The scant interaction arising from inconvenient location of the staffroom is also felt by teachers in the second floor:

> Little contact. Very little contact with colleagues in third floor because the work place is different. There are few encounters except going to toilet. You have no time to stay and chat with others. (Mark, p.18, ln.5-7)

The physical separation goes beyond creating a barrier in which interaction between staffroom members is hindered. It serves as a basis in which teachers of the same staffroom have more interactions. Opportunities for cooperation and substantial help are greatly enhanced. On the other hand, teachers between staffrooms have scant interaction and it makes cooperation more formal.

> [Questions about relations of teachers] The teachers especially those along the corridor are most co-operative. It is easy to work and co-operate with them. In contrast, those teachers whom have fewer interactions are more difficult to work with. For instance, our staff [teachers in third floor] basically go downstairs to the staffroom in second floor. The time for interaction is scant, and sometimes you do not know what they are thinking about. (John, p.26, ln.15-21)

> [Questions about any good friends in all teachers] Yes, and it is because of the seating in the staffroom. You can see a corridor consisting those teachers. And it affects that, for instance, I am sitting in the middle of the row and so I became more familiar with them. But it does not mean that other staffs are not good, it is merely because of the location of seating. ... And I am not quite familiar with colleagues in another staffroom. (Timothy, p.26, ln.1-10)

> In cases where I cannot solve the problems, I would find staffs in the discipline team for help. Another method is that when students enter the staffroom of the second floor, I do not have to face the student alone. In the classroom I have to confront a class of students, but when the student is in the staffroom, it becomes that he has to face a group of teachers. Through the words from different teachers the student could not think of so many points to refute our reasons. And the attitudes would not be so -- when he sees so many teachers. ... So I discover from the experience of working here that when I have to confront those problematic students I would get them to the staffroom before discussion. (Mark, p.4 ln.18 to p.5 ln.5)

In addition to the increased difficulty in cooperation among teachers, the division of the staffrooms carries with them different orientations towards school policies. The obscure yet contrasting values held by the two staffrooms are made manifest in times of staff meetings. Observations over several staff meetings reveal that teachers of second floor always sit together where those of third floor have much random association. The contrast is most acute with regard to the discussion about

direction of the school:

> You would discover that at times of meeting, the ones who raise questions are all those in second floor, isn't it? They stand up [to raise questions] because it seems that there are discrepancies between school policies and their acceptance level on them. The main point is that there are some who do not agree with the idea of the principal. (Barnabas, p.13, ln.1-5)

The different values which is referred by the teachers above is evidenced by the comments of a staff of the second floor:

> We had fierce debates. The process of staff meeting is a reflection. A clear signal stand out: we do not have a consensual objective. Therefore we have to adjust and debate again on this issue. (Mark, p.11, ln.23-28)

Thus it would be oversimplifying to characterize the staff team as a unifying entity. Though there are no hostile confrontations among teachers, the separation of staffrooms along with the development of the school has changed a consensual staff team into one consisting of differential collegiality. Teachers can identify various group differnces, upon which intimate help can be found and conflict is based upon. As a result, teachers associated with distinct groups come to have different perception on the culture of teaching.

It has been noted that teachers have different views on the school authority. To some teachers, it is the prime cause leading to differentiations among teachers. Thus it leads us to investigate on the changes of school administration over time in CSS.

Relations with School Administration

The school structure of CSS has experienced drastic changes in recent years. From 1965, it has long been the practice of appointing a Brother as the principal because the school is aided by a Catholic association. The recent appointment of

headship from Chinese teachers in the school had initiated reforms on the school structure. In Hong Kong the principal has been delegated supreme power on the operation of a school by the Board of Director, and thus the philosophy of the principal has definite power in transforming the relations between the school authority and the teachers.

At the time when the Brother was the principal, the school could be characterized as adopting a lassie-faire policy towards the performance of teachers. The school demanded little from them and it put light control on their performance. All administrative affairs were held in charge by a teacher who acted as a liaison between the principal and teachers.

> When the Brother was the principal, he adopted a policy of freedom. Usually he would not intervene the aspects of teaching and let teachers develop by their own. (Peter, p.7, ln.9-11)

The loose coupling (Weick, 1979) of the school structure was reflected from both the work of teachers and aspects of school administration. In the former aspect, teachers were free to develop their pedagogy in classroom, and even the curriculum was subject to loose monitoring:

> There was a meeting only on first of September, the first day of the school year. It is at that time that the schedule of work and textbooks were delivered, and you knew what you had to teach. Usually there was no schedule of work at the opening of the term. It was left to be discussed among teachers on the way through the term. Teachers were just following the sequent order [of the textbook]. The schedule was then distributed to teachers when the panel had made it up. (Esther, p.6, ln.18-23)

The great freedom experienced by teachers was hand in hand with the loose structure on school administration. It is quite surprising that in a school with such a long history, the school structure is rather incomplete when compared with other schools. The discipline and guidance teams were set up only a few years ago, and

the academic board is established in this academic year. In case of established structures, the operation has left teachers with enormous amount of discretion. The base of such freedom was that basically the school had a loose structure which was unable to state out clearly the role of teachers and enforce strict requirements on them.

> [At early 90s when he began to teach here] At present we usually have meetings after school. It was not the case in the past, however, at least in the first or second year of my teaching here. At that time, they would say "Oh, there should be a meeting; just dismiss students for three lessons". There were no formal letters to parents, and there was merely making notes on the student handbook as notice to parents requiring their signature. ... Sometimes after three lessons in the morning, there was announcement at the fourth lesson declaring early dismissal for two lessons because teachers had a meeting. (John, p.9, ln.1-11)

Such a school structure came to an end with the retreat of appointing brothers as principal. A senior Chinese teacher took up the position in 1992 and started the reform of formalizing the school structure. He left the school for emigration in the following year, and the present principal succeeded the office. He shared the same diagnosis of the school problem and determined to change the present situation in a more active way.

Without denying the benefits of allowing room of freedom to teachers, the principal focuses on the drawbacks of the absence of structure. In his own words,

> In the lack of institution, teachers can choose to do or not. In this sense, it depends totally upon their consciousness. Many problems may appear, that is, they can do nothing. ... [without structures] some teachers will not know what to follow. Some may even take advantage of it and say they need not bother anything. (p.3)

To him, the absence of rules would hinder the development of the school because it is used as an excuse for teachers to avoid taking up responsibilities. Although the setting up of rules may not induce motivation on teachers, it

nevertheless can maintain a minimum level of teaching quality which is considered as reasonable in his eyes:

> [on the workload of teachers] in comparison with other schools, it is not too heavy here in general. In this situation, if we provide them with some institutions and force them to achieve some work, to give some examples, book inspection, teacher appraisal, it is not a big problem to them. It is because those things such as marking books are a must to all teachers, and we are just having a look regularly. All teachers know the requirement and they are set up in the panel meeting. But whether they will follow it through, we don't know. If we stress on the quality of teaching, however, we should have [such structures], ... for its presence does not mean that the workload of teachers are enhanced. They should be doing all these. If they perceive a heavier workload with the addition of such requirements, it implies that the things in the past are unreasonable. (p.4, ln.1-15)

In his conception, the setting up of rules and institutions are to facilitate the work of teachers instead of putting more burden to their existing work since the purpose is to specify clearly the role and responsibilities of each teacher. Hence the setting up of various school teams are used to indicate in concrete terms who are responsible for what duties, and rules concerning the requirements of teachers can be printed in black and white. Other regulations such as book inspection and class visits are implemented to ensure that teachers are fulfilling the requirements of their work set down by the rules.

Since the initiation of formalizing the school structure, it has elicited diverse reactions from teachers. Some sided with the principal on the need to establish institutions and perceived the existing workload as too light. Others had reservations on his policies and secretly complained to colleagues about the increasing burden laid down by school. They did not make their resentment open due to the threat of power held by the principal, thus choosing the path of "strategic compliance" (Lacey, 1977). Some comments from teachers represent the diversity of views:

> If a novice teacher complains that the workload is heavy here, it means

> that he/she is entering the wrong profession. It must be, because comparatively speaking the amount of workload here is not heavy. (Matthew, p.13, ln.16-17)
>
> Personally speaking, the workload is instead on the paperwork from the Education Department. It is especially troublesome at the beginning of the school year such as the application of student travel allowance, allowance of student fees and etc.. In contrast, the workload on school duties is appropriate; it is not too heavy. (Peter, p.12, ln.10-14)
>
> Despite the adoption of a very informal way in this school, it has its own advantages. Do not think the setting up of all regulations and systems must be better. ... At present the principal has been changed and the school becomes increasingly formalized. Many problems are gaining awareness now. Firstly, teachers cannot adopt to such changes of being restrained. ... There are no book inspections in the past but now it has been regularized for two times a year. In the past the principal never visited classes except extraordinary cases. At present, however, it has been stressed that classes of all teachers must be inspected. It gives enormous pressure on the self identity of teachers, especially we have a tradition of free practice. Some staffs are very angry with this although they do not express it in words. (Stephen, p.6, ln.29 to p.7, ln.14)

In conclusion, the changes of the social environment of CSS confront teachers with a completely different set of problems. Similarly, the type of resources possessed by teachers changes, some of which becomes important in certain times but not in others. In each specific problem, teachers are facing a configuration of resources and constraints and the factors above definitely play a part in shaping the orientations on the problems and solutions held by teachers. It is to these specific problems that we now turn to.

Prelude to Chapter Four and Chapter Five

The study of Lortie (1975) has called upon the most important difference in teaching with other professions: that the major portion of teachers' work is confined to an isolated classroom setting. Teachers in his sample showed that the main source of their psychic reward lies on their interaction with students, and the results are

confirmed by other studies conducted in Hong Kong context (Wong, 1988).

The argument marks only the beginning of a set of further questions, however. How should we conceptualize the work of teachers in classroom? How can we study their source of satisfaction derived from the diverse types of interactions with students? Does the argument imply that it has nothing to do with the school structures and other people besides students? How does the inclusion of orientations of teachers contribute to understanding of how job satisfaction come about? They are all important questions awaiting clarification if further progress is to be made on studies of job satisfaction in teaching profession.

The first and foremost task to tackle the above question lies on a proper classification of teachers' work in classroom. The diverse nature of work conducted by teachers in classroom has brought about various conceptualization of their role. For instance, Soreson (1963) proposed that there were six principal sub-roles for teachers: adviser, counsellor, disciplinarian, information giver, motivator and referrer. Another set of six sub-roles was provided by Blyth (1965) concerning the sub-roles of instructor, parent-substitute, organizer, value-bearer, classifier and welfare-worker. Trow (1960) suggested eight classroom sub-roles of teachers under two headings. The administrative and executive roles included that of disciplinarian, measurer and record keeper, learning-aids officer and programme director while the instructional roles included those of motivator, resource person, evaluator and adapter.

Hargreaves (1972) has delineated the role of a teacher into two sub-roles of disciplinarian and instruction. The contribution of the classification over previous ones rests upon its concise yet comprehensive conceptualization . They are the

essential elements to be implemented by all teachers in classrooms and all derivative functions are related to these sub-roles directly or indirectly.

Another reason for adopting the classification comes from a practical concern. It is understood that the classification is at most analytically delineable; in reality the two types of activities are often mixed and a clear-cut distinction of them is almost impossible. Yet it should not be overlooked that most of the teachers have their "first-order construct" based upon the two sub-roles. It is instructive to the researcher by the motto of the school being studied: discipline before instruction. The two sub-roles are treated as the utmost dimensions to be dealt with both in the school and classroom level.

As a result, we assert that instruction and discipline constitute two contexts in which satisfactions can be sought by teachers. The next two chapters are organised around the themes, and the format of presentation will be as follows. First, the policies initiated and enforced by CSS in response to the environmental changes will be described. Then the interpretations embedded in the culture of teachers towards the policies will be considered. After that, some careers of teachers are presented to demonstrate how their efficacy is related to the foregoing culture shared by teachers in the school.

CHAPTER 4

Culture and Efficacy in Instructing Students

The aim of education has been interpreted widely by various scholars. In one sense, education serves different purposes for different groups. For some people, it is the way to achieve upward mobility. Other people regard it as a mechanism for perpetuating class inequality. To some theorists, school is considered as a place where values are transmitted. Durkheim regarded schools as the main institution where the moral values of society are disseminated, an idea further elaborated by Parsons (1973) and Dreeben (1968). Marxist scholars such as Bowles and Gintis (1976) and Willis (1977) gave the proposition that school provided students with a set of values consistent with the capitalist work orientations.

From the point of view of the state, however, all these interpretations are secondary to the most explicit objective of school education which is taken for granted by public: knowledge transmission. In Hong Kong, a working paper on the goal of school education (, 1992) may reflect this idea. A first glance of the paper may lead one to have the impression that the highest priority is to develop both academic and non-academic potential of students. However, subsequent objectives are the fulfilment of market needs and the acquisition of learning skills. These broad objectives include includes the consolidation of the foundation of reading and mathematics; development of logic and inference and to help them acquire knowledge by themselves. Societal and moral consciousness, art

and cultural development are considered as the least important subjects in school education.

The official goal of transmitting knowledge, which is referred to as instruction, is interpreted with great variations among schools. Here the school being studied confronts a situation in which instruction is difficult to take place. How does the school consider its position with regard to the issue of instruction? How do teachers in the school perceive their role? How do they derive satisfaction from the instruction process? These are questions to be addressed in this chapter.

Instruction Problem at School Level

The present academic standards of students is far from satisfactory. A comprehensive examination of school results and its comparison with other schools are required in order to fully substantiate the claim, which is beyond the scope of the present research due to insufficient data. Here only two pieces of information are offered to reflect the general academic performance of students in CSS.

In most schools English can be seen as one of the most important subjects. The panel meeting in this year records that the public exam results last year are far from satisfactory:

> In terms of the public examination results, the passing percentage of CE English Language was about 15%. The poor CE result was mainly because of the source of low standard students from other schools. However, the ASL Use of English result was better. The passing percentage was about 70%. (English Panel Meeting 1993/94, p.15)

If the examination result of the Certificate of Examination serves as a kind of reliable indicator, the figure of highest passing rate is indicative. Interview with a teacher revealed that the subject having the highest passing rate last year was

Geography, which had a percentage of only 58%.

The interpretation of this result, conceived as a consensus among teachers, is the gradual increase of student intake of poor banding. It acts as the major source of problem upon which other related issues such as lack of motivation to learn and inadequate parental support follow. The significance of this construction of student image will be further elaborated and substantiated in later part of this chapter. Here it is relevant to add the point that dissatisfaction with the academic aspect of students involves not only on their results but also on their attitude of learning:

> You can see that with regard to examinations, [the students here] have no atmosphere to tests. They have no atmosphere to study. Even at the moment of exams they have no atmosphere, isn't it? [The students] go in, may be 15 or 20 minutes, they have already slept on the desk. It is a problem, and we are currently thinking ways to improve. ... Now we don't have [the atmosphere], no one study seriously, in CSS there seems only a small group of people studying. (Barnabas, p.5 ln.13-22)

The picture described by the teacher is that students in CSS do not care much about their learning. Even in the examination period, they do not show any sense of anxiety and aspirations for better results. The following fieldnotes show the extent to which students abandon their academic results:

> Timothy said in a cynical tone that the exam papers of classes B and C [he is currently marking the papers of class C] were easier to mark because they did not answer the section on short questions. I observed that quite a lot of students did not write down anything on the section where short answers of about a line was required. (fieldnotes, 28 Nov., 94)

In face of the situation that students have low academic performance and aspiration to learn, what are orientations of the school towards the academic performances of students? First of all, it is important to note that the school seems not concern much about the outcome of students' performances. A policy held in school which will be elaborated in next chapter is "discipline before teaching":

without a reasonable degree of discipline, students cannot have a proper environment to learn anything. This policy, however, leaves a question to be answered: what is it that has to be learnt?

From records documented in the staff meeting, explicit objectives about the academic requirements of students are not singled out in school policy. There are four basic aims of the school, and none of them is related to the aspects of the objective of school results. The four aims are "to look after both good and poor students adequately", "to cultivate students' sense of belonging"; "to raise students' self-esteem" and "to help students have a happy school life". The purpose of providing them with an enjoyable environment is considered as an end in itself rather than a means to facilitate their curriculum learning.

As we turn our view from the objectives in the official document to the actual operations of the school, however, we must admit that it is impossible for a school to neglect or abandon totally the process of instructing students, or in other words, to teach them the required syllabus set down by the Education Department. Here the principal serves as a reality-definer to interpret what are the meanings of the school objectives because he possesses the authority to enforce school policies. With regard to the objective of the school, the principal thought that

> I really hope that secondary schooling can cultivate the motive of searching knowledge by students, ... that is, to develop interest in words and knowledge. (p.2)

He maintains that it is particularly important in an age when audio-visual stimulation has largely predominated the minds of students:

> Now it is basically the era of image. The students previously were facing TV and now TV games. They have little contact with the press, ... I think what the press contains is very abundant, they should ... they must have contact with these things in order to live in future. If they

> can have a sense of interest earlier, they do not feel so fearful, then they would undoubtedly benefit from it. (p.2)

The above comments reveal that the central concerns of the principal are the eliciting of students' motivation and equipping them with ability to learn. Downplaying the results of students does not mean that the process of learning is ignored altogether. This interpretation enables us to make sense of the school policies which try to maintain a better teaching quality without posing any standards that has to be met by teachers. Seen in this way, the policies of the school can be analyzed in two aspects. They consist of the building up of a facilitating environment for students to learn and the strengthening of the teaching process by posing stricter control over the performance of teachers.

Streaming is an alleged mechanism providing a facilitating environment for students with different abilities to learn. It originates from the changes of student quality in mid-80s. Initially the intention is to group the students who want to learn into a class so that they would not be disturbed by other students in the classroom:

> At the beginning, we do not have any problems on students. In early 80s, we stream students because we consider the input of the Form 1 students. At about 1985-1986, in so far as I remember, it is beginning to become worse off. Suddenly the banding drops drastically, there is a group of students who really have problems. If we do not initiate any changes, then all three classes cannot be taught. As a result we stream a better class and mix up the other two classes. (Barnabas, p.14, ln.17-26)

Originally, the streaming practice arises out of necessity: it is to separate those who want to learn form the ones who disturbs classroom order. However, the development of the practice gradually creates an effect where the streamed class is treated differently from other classes. A test is conducted to all Form 1 students before the first term of the academic year in order to differentiate those with better

academic results into class A. More resources are put into them and higher academic requirements are expected. In turn, students in class A have higher self-esteem, regarding themselves as the "hope of the school":

> Esther told me that 1A was stricter in both academic and behavioral requirements. She cited an example that a student who was given a tick [representing the signal of punishment] in classes B and C, the student would be punished for 5 minutes whereas the length of punishment would be 30 minutes for students in class A. Although there existed such differences, students in class A did not feel resentful since they felt that they were better students, an elite class among Form 1 students. (fieldnotes, 15 Nov., 94)

> [the classes B and C] have set themselves a very low self-image, that is, they do not want to strive for better. For instance I have asked them whether they want to study in 2A next year. They answered that they did not want to have the pressure to study, and they did not want to do so much work. (Rebecca, p.6, ln.18-23)

Differential resources to classes can be seen most obviously in English subject. Students in class A are split into two sub-classes, each of which has about 20 students. They are then given more intensive training and homework in order to make them learn more. Some scripts from the panel meetings help consolidate this view:

> Split classes teachers should speak more English in classroom and train the students more on classroom and campus English in order to make them feel ease in English speaking environment. (English panel meeting record, p.4)

> We are still receiving mostly Band 5 students into our Form one classes. We stream the better ones into one class and let them have split class teaching in which we hope can strengthen and facilitate higher standard teaching. The policy has to be continued. We find that we can do a lot more in split class teaching with brighter students and less classrooms discipline problems. (English panel meeting record, p.14)

As a result, the institution of streaming turns out to be a policy of developing elite classes. The process of differentiation-polarization (Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970; Hammersley, 1983) set in which serves to the concentration of unequal school

resources to a minority of students.

Other policies are also in operation to provide a facilitating environment for students to learn even in non-elite classes. One of these measures is the adoption of Chinese as the medium of instruction in lower forms, and it will be extended to higher forms from next year. In addition, the policy of school-based curriculum in lower forms in which only part of the required curriculum designed by the Education Department are taught is carried out to help students:

> This year, we are going to revise the Form 1 syllabus to meet the needs of our students. We hope this revision can help those students of very weak in mathematical skills to catch up. (Maths panel meeting, p.2)

> In this school year we start to plan a school based curriculum of English Language for Form 1 classes. The main aim is to help all the F.1 boys to revise the P.5 & P.6 Eng Lang Syllabus. However, the boys' performance on Eng Lang subject was not so good because they lacked interests in learning English and the teachers could not spare time to prepare the worksheets. (English panel meeting, p.14)

In juxtaposition to facilitating the environment of learning by students, the school also strengthens the quality of teaching process in recent years. The change is seen most remarkably with the change of the principal. Consistent with his views of the defects of under-institutionalization, he sought to establish policies which he considers absent in past years. Significant changes are the establishment of academic board and the setting up of a book inspection system half-yearly. One of the teachers participating in school administration considers that

> I believe in the long run the school will put academic objectives in school aims. It will be, but the problem is that at present the operation of the basic mechanism, the academic board, is still premature. That means we do not have much meetings. ... I believe the principal have said it was a task of highest priority, and he knows that it should be. In recent months we are accelerating the development of it [academic board]. (Barnabas, p.20)

Teacher evaluation becomes a matter of importance. At present, the principal

is establishing these institutions formally in order to maintain a certain level of teaching quality:

> [talking about establishment of institutions] To take an example, book evaluation. We do not have this system before; now we have. This is not a big problem to teachers, because they all think that marking books is necessary. Now we just have a look periodically. Actually the panel meetings have set down the requirement, for instance, how many essays in each term, but in the past no one follows it. Whether some may not work it out fully, I dare not say, all teachers may follow this way. But basically I think if we emphasize teaching quality, we should have [the book inspection]. (p.4)

> Each subject Panel Chairman is requested to evaluate his own field of academic work through checking of students' academic work, try to identify the inadequacies and problems area associated with students' outcome and reflect the facts to the school authority. A very brief report on students' outcome, inadequacies and problem area associated with his own subject should be produced to the school authority half-yearly. Hopefully, school will help the teachers involved to solve the problems. (Staff Meeting Record, 30 August, 94, p.5)

In conclusion, it can be seen that the present academic performance of students is far from satisfactory. Instead of emphasizing the outcome of student result, the school tries to give a better learning environment to students and strengthen the teaching process by posing more evaluation to teacher performance. In next section we turn to analyze how teachers come to perceive their academic requirements under the above orientation of the school.

Teachers' Perceptions towards Instructing Students

Whether teachers come to be satisfied with their work from instructing students depends on how they perceive their work. Moreover, their perception is embedded in a context in which different actors (students, colleagues and school administrators) interact to shape their views. This section attempts to delineate this

process.

Teachers in CSS generally rate the importance of academic performance of students lower than other objectives such as discipline. As the next chapter shows, the ranking of relative importance by teachers tends to stress more on the behavioral dimension of students. However, the figure should not lead us to think it as a natural phenomenon or a trait shared by all teachers in Hong Kong. Stripping away its seemingly taken for granted nature, we need to investigate the process of how teachers learn to have such conception.

As noted at the beginning of the chapter, the poor academic standards of students here is considered to be a fact shared by all teachers, and they are illustrated by some objective evidence. The most interesting issue here, however, is to see how teachers interpret the reasons for the problem. Here we can see that teachers attribute the low academic achievements to students rather than to themselves: it is because they have no motivation to learn. The tracing back of the problem would then suggest an interpretation that the prime cause is exogenous to their ability to intervene. If a student choose to abandon to learn, teachers have no means to force them study. Hence teachers here are sharing a culture in which they have low inefficacy towards instructing students.

This attitude is elucidated clearly from discussing with teachers about student problems. In most cases, parents are often thought of as a reason why students lack motivation to learn:

> Q: What do you consider the major problem of students here?
> B: The major problem is their motivation to learn, which is very weak.
>
> Q: That means they do not have interest to learn.
> B: Not necessarily having no interest. I believe the problem is very complex and interest is only one of the reasons. I believe motivation

> consists of many things such as expectations of parents and peer groups. ... We have a teacher, for instance Mr. X. Because he is new to the school and they teach the new students, so when he saw them not to hand in homework or do it badly, [he] phoned to their parents. The parents had stopped him at the first moment [and said], "if it is about homework, there is no need to talk to me". It means that they know what is happening. They have already known what is meant when their sons were allocated to CSS. So do not talk to me about their academic performance, discuss with me only about their behavioral problems. (Barnabas, p.4-5)

The sense of impotence is reflected in the account of a teacher who are in vain in forcing students to learn. She described a non-elite class in form 1 where the students are lazy to learn rather than incapable to do so:

> They do not want to study in class A. Why? Because they are lazy; they keep on being lazy. For instance, those students in class C have the ability to study, they know the materials. But they are lazy -- to a degree you cannot imagine. But they know the materials, they are not so weak on their foundations. But even after you have talked to them, scolded them, the result is in vain. They are doing it as before. I don't know how to understand these students, it is very interesting. Maybe a large part of responsibility lies on their parents. They are too indulgent to their children. I have seen some parents who do not know how to teach their children. (Rebecca, p.9)

The teacher here interprets the reasons for non-elite classes to remain there as having some innate character. Since they are born to be lazy, any efforts put by the teacher to motivate them becomes useless. In addition, parents are perceived as the primary reason leading them to have the present situation.

Although teachers would not argue that the school has no impact in contributing to the problem, the interpretations tend to remove themselves from the scenario. Effects from peer group is depicted as the motor steering those students who want to learn into one of having an attitude of resign:

> Q: Why don't they want to learn, in your opinion?
> S: I think there are several reasons. For one thing they don't know the material, that is, they have very weak foundations. And during the class other students are playing and disturbing them. At the beginning some of them are not playing around, but the majority of

> the class do not want to listen and play around. So he comes to follow others. Or since they have been disturbed by others, they can't follow the curriculum. Initially they can't understand, then gradually they come to resign.
>
> Q: So what methods do you employ to deal with?
> S: I think there are no effective ways to deal with them. If they do not have the motivation, then it is very difficult. The most [I can do] is to devise some measures to improve the classroom order, mainly those of punishment. (Solomon, p.9 ln.18-26 to p.10, ln.15-18)

All these evidence point out that teachers perceive themselves having little power in making students learn. Since teachers cannot do much to reverse the situation, the most they can do is to adjust to it. Instead of pushing students to learn the materials in the curriculum, teachers are trying to lower the expectations and requirements so that students could follow it easier. Since it is taken by teachers as a regular and normal phenomenon, the process of this mechanism is seen most clearly in new teachers who have to deliberately adjust their expectations of students in due course of their work. Although the academic standards of students are so poor that they often feel shocked initially, they have to make quick adjustments because the failure of it would cause serious classroom disturbances and other discipline problems. A new teacher describes how he adjusts to this process in his interaction with students:

> At the beginning I have done a wrong thing. I still consider them as the Form one students in my era. About the homework, I stress on the creative aspect. Do not think that it is something very difficult, it means only after I have taught them something, I give the homework to them. I told them what to take notice, then I let them do it at home. The outcome is that many students did it badly to me. They have the conception that teachers have copied the answer for them; what they do is only to copy it back to me. The best of it is not to copy it wrongly. ... That is, I let them do their homework, it turned out that it is impossible, ... then I become more careful in giving homework. Maybe there are ten questions. I would do two or three to them, and I would tell them what to notice in other questions. After that I let them do it at home. Now I discover that they are much better. (Samuel, p.10)

Another teacher recounted how he compromised with students about the amount of homework in adjusting their ability at the first year of his teaching:

> I remembered the year when they were still in Form one. Because I was the first year teaching here, I did not know their ability. So at the first few weeks I gave them a lot of homework. Then some of them said "sir, we cannot manage it". I also found that they could not do it because I could not figure out what they had done in their homework. So I discussed with them and asked how much they could do it daily. They requested for not more than 10 questions. So from that onward I did not give them more than 10 math questions daily. On average it was about 5 questions. After that they did not complain any more. (Timothy, p.12-13)

Experienced teachers have developed a method of giving homework to students according to their abilities. Generally speaking, in the process of learning creative thinking is discouraged and filling in the blanks is common:

> If you dare, you may give homework for them to do at home. For the worse classes, maybe they don't know how to do. You have to discuss with them in class, after that they copy it down. That is, you have to discuss with them. After I have told them the answer, they have discussed it over, to make sure that they have known it, then I write it down on the blackboard. Then they copy it. But it does not mean that I don't have to correct them. Maybe they have copied them wrongly. It is frequent that they have copied it wrongly. So most of the time they are copying, but the point is that we have discussed them before they copy it. They can't use their own words to express it, and we help sort them out to let them copy it. (Solomon, teaching Integrated Sciences, p.6-7)

> Q: So usually how would you give them homework?
> L: Usually the homework I give them have full guidelines. If they have a mere look on them, to pay attention to the class, then they should not be unable to do it. Usually it is a form of filling in the blanks.

> Q: Filling in the blanks.
> L: That is giving them all the steps and tell them to fill the substance. That is, in the hope that after the class, they could calm down and think it carefully whether they could figure out the answer. Usually we would adjust according to their ability to give hints to them. For if they do not even try, they would still be unable to do it. (Luke, p.4, teaching maths)

The significance of the process is that teachers here learn to redefine what is

meant by "learning" in the process of giving homework. Instead of giving appropriate amount of homework to consolidate what students have learnt in class, they perceive it as one in which students come to finish some manual work such as copying in a minimal level.

The logical deduction of lowering standards in classroom teaching is that teachers also have to learn how to adjust to the abilities of students in giving them examinations. The first-term examination serves to give guidelines to new teachers as what should be done to suit the standards of students. In the period of first-term examination, there are some discussions on the proper way of how to design examination papers:

> Solomon and Eve talked about a new teacher who designed the exam paper by drawing materials that were not in the exercise books. They thought that there would be problems. (fieldnotes, 30 Nov., 94)

> [With regard to a maths paper. Luther said] the paper seemed a bit too difficult to all students. He was surprised to hear that there were only 4 students in his class who could get a pass in the examination. He had a look on the paper and considered that it was a bit too difficult as he pointed out that the brightest boy in the class who could get about 70+ in normal tests got only 60 in this exam. There was only one student who got a pass in the other two classes. (fieldnotes, 30 Nov., 94)

Further discussions reveal that the content as well as the format have to be taken into account in designing examination papers:

> There was discussion of Treasa's exam paper with Solomon. The style of the paper was not the same as that in form 1, as it was noted by Treasa. Solomon said that the paper should contain fewer words because when students encountered so many words they would automatically think that they could not answer them. Therefore it was better to give more questions of a type where there were more figures [such as adding the sum of angles of a triangle]. The questions should not be compressed into two columns in a page. Treasa confessed that she had not consulted previous exam papers in designing the present exam paper. (fieldnotes, 30 Nov., 94)

Of course the emergence of this conception of learning cannot be divorced

from the environment in which it is embedded. In the process of making adjustment to the expectations of students' academic standards, teachers have to learn the requirements of school authority. The isolated setting of conducting their teaching activities in a classroom implies that their competence has to be inferred from other indicators (Denscombe, 1985). The examination results of students may serve as an indicator of teachers' efforts in the classroom. Poor standards of students may pose teachers to a threat of competence: that they are unable to motivate students and make them learn. Therefore teachers have to gain access to the expectations of school authority on how much students have to achieve.

Nevertheless, teachers here share a perspective that poor academic performance of students does not imply that they are incompetent since it is the students' lack of motivation to learn that lead to their poor results. It is consistent with the previous analysis of school policies that the outcome of student results are not stressed. Although there is no formal recognition on this point, it is regarded as having no problems in case that the classes one is teaching is having poor results. Without explicit rules to follow, it is through the process of social interaction that teachers come to learn the norm. From daily interactions with colleagues new teachers learn that poor examination results will not constitute a threat to them. An experienced teacher put the issue in this way:

> Q: If the marks are so low, do you feel difficult to account for it?
> S: Well, we have no ways to do it. That is, the principal and the school authority have already anticipated the possibility of this situation. We won't deliberately give them low marks nor high marks. ... Therefore I feel that there does not appear the problem of accountability. That is, the school authority does not stress on the marks, it knows the quality of students here. Indeed they would feel surprised if the marks are too high. (Solomon, p.12, ln.7-15)

Here it is somehow ironic to note that the school has already foreseen the poor

results of the students before examinations. Therefore the school will consider it curious when the students achieve good results instead of the opposite case. The fieldnotes below shows some episodes where new teachers are getting to know the expectations here:

> There is no pressure from school as to ensure that certain progress must be made by students or maintaining a certain percentage of pass rate in CE. The principal and staffs know the quality of students here. (fieldnotes, Timothy, 29 Nov., 94)

> He was complaining about the low academic ability of students. However, he was delighted to know that the school had no such rule as requiring a standard pass rate in the examination by a teacher as in other schools. (fieldnotes, Samuel, 4 Nov.,94)

> Eve asked Moses to be more lenient in giving marks to F.4 English oral exam. However, Moses said that their standards were so bad that it was impossible to give them a pass. Although the students had known previously which chapter in the book they would have to read, they still could not do it well. Some even asked him whether he could be allowed not to read. ... Eve asked Moses the range of marks given to students. He said his class had no pass. The maximum was 19 out of 50 and the lowest of them had 5 marks. Eve further asked about the duration of the exam. She considered giving passes to more than 10 students so that she could be accountable to the school. (fieldnotes, 30 Nov., 94)

The last episode describes how new teachers here are in a process of learning about the expectations of the academic standards of students and school authority. Some of them feel uneasy to fail the whole class that they have to "rescue" some of them. However, teachers having several years of experience here are accustomed to evaluating the standard to students in a way that they do not have to worry about giving accounts to the school authority.

It should be emphasized that in the above analysis teachers accepting lower standards and expectations do not mean that students have no ability to learn. Nor does it imply that every teacher will abandon their task of instructing students. For instance, a case is found where he has put his utmost efforts to make students learn,

although the mission of being "accountable to his teaching consciousness" becomes the main source of stress in his work:

> [Before the examination] I said to them, "if you don't get a pass in the exam, I would punish you after school when the exam is over. So do not think that it is all over after the exam". Of course they don't believe it. Furthermore they are lazy and hope to get a pass by chance. The result is that nearly 30 students have failed. In a class of 37 there are over 20 who have failed. Then I said to them that ... they must pay for it, that is, the time longer than revision for the exam last time. So I have them stayed for a week after school to make them revise the exam paper part by part daily. After revision, I ask them about the material, and let them go only if they have known them. ... A week later I give them another test, and it is surely better. But you can see that for some thing you need them to memorize, they are willing to learn because they know I meant to say that if they fail again in this test they have to stay for another week. So they have to study on them. ... That means they are not unable to do it, it depends on whether you can force them to do so. If you can insist, then you can do it. (John, p.13-14)

In summary, teachers in CSS have a culture of low efficacy towards the achievements of students. This, in turn, leads them to lower their expectations of students. The process of learning becomes one of copying accurately in their homework. The loose linkage between academic performance of students and the competence of teachers reinforces of this pattern of teaching.

Seen in this way, teachers have great flexibility to put their time and effort on the academic aspect of students. For those teachers who are devoted to improving academic performance of students, the present norms do not put any constraints on their plans. On the other hand, it is an advantage to those teachers who want to make their work easy to handle. A teacher showing resentment on the latter attitudes of some colleagues has made this comment:

> I think [the lassie-faire policy] it can be a kind of excuse where some teachers thought that students cannot be taught. About dictation, for instance, the teachers thought that they cannot do it. Then the teachers just randomly gives a chapter to them for dictation. Even when one gets zero marks, do you think there will be follow up? Possibly not. (John, p.10)

In contrast to a commonly shared conception of having a low efficacy towards students, the form of culture among teachers with regard to sharing instructional strategies can be characterized as individualistic. Specifically, teachers do not have a regular practice, through institutional or informal means, to share the idea of how to instruct students or to prepare materials together. The way of dealing with instructional problems resides in the sphere of individual teachers. The following comments from a new teacher shows how uneasy he feels in discussing with colleagues on matters concerning instruction:

> Q: If you have questions about instruction, how would you handle it?
> L: Usually I will not be in a loss of how to teach, but only whether I am teaching effectively. Maybe adopting other alternatives are better. [Problems on instructional matters] are difficult to discuss because they have not watched how you teach in classroom. .. For instance when I find something that I do not know in the subject, I would ask the colleagues, or the panel, or some experienced teachers. But I won't discuss with them on how to teach [in classroom].
>
> Q: You have not thought of asking them.
> L: Because you ... it is very difficult to tell, ... it is difficult to ask someone to give you a method to teach, do you understand? It is very difficult. (Luther, p.12, ln.20 to p.13, ln.1-3)

The above teacher reflects the difficulty faced in asking colleagues guidance on instruction in classroom. Although no reasons are put forth in explaining such reluctance, a point that can be made is that this reluctance is confined to asking colleagues of the school only. Another excerpt is about his possible improvement of pedagogy through the course of Diploma of Education:

> Actually the course of Dip. Ed. currently studying is not without stimulation. The present stimulation lies on the aspect of pedagogy. I can see that the methods the lecturers provided can be very interesting. If you can handle it well, it can be very enjoyable, even in Band 5 schools. In our school, we have an even greater demand on these pedagogy exactly because they do not have much interests on words and characters. And they do not like to listen to what you say formally in classroom. In this case, the skills in pedagogy are even more useful. (Luther, p.11, ln.11-17)

The experience, however, does not rest on new teachers alone. Experienced teachers also give the same comments:

> I feel that every teacher has his/her own styles. The method applicable to one teacher may not have the same effect on another. (Luke, p.11 ln.7-8)

For him, teaching is not a collaborative enterprise. It is best considered as the acquisition of a craft in which there are no common points for sharing. The idea is more obvious in his subsequent elaborations:

> Q: So there are no problems [about instruction] to you?
> L: Every teacher has to find his own way out. It is the most effective way because he is the only one in a classroom, and he makes the appropriate responses with regard to the changing situation. It is the most effective way. The strategies other teachers teach him are not necessarily applicable. (Luke, p.11, ln.9-16)

Without any collective means, every teacher tries to figure out their own strategies to deal with the academic performance of students in the isolated classroom setting.

The above analysis has shown the perceptions of teachers with regard to the academic performance of students. In general, the school structure stressing the teaching process instead of the academic outcome provides a possibility for teachers to transform their objective in classroom from teaching to other aims. The teachers here are shown as active agents who appropriate the structural plausibility to adapt to their immediate constraints in teaching students. The following section shows how some teachers who find it so difficult to derive satisfaction from getting students learnt shift their objective to other aspects. It also sheds lights on why teachers are shifting their perceived importance from the academic performance of students to other aspects.

The Case of Maria

Maria has taught in CSS for two years, and she thought she had no choice in entering the teaching profession at the time when she needed a job. She had taught in two other schools before coming to CSS.

At present she was very dissatisfied with the job. Looking back the time when she first taught here, the school assignment had contributed to shaping her teaching experience by assigning her to teach a class B. It gave her much burden and she had very frustrating feeling toward the class:

> All of them are bad guys. The situation is that one [student for me] is enough [for me to discipline], how can I look after thirty such guys? It makes me feel very difficult to teach. And why do they become naughty? It is because they can't catch up [with the curriculum]. They become naughty because their academic results are poor. As a result, you have to lower the standard to a very, very low level. (p.8, ln.2-10)

For her, the source of discipline problem in classroom lies on the poor ability of students to learn. In the first year, she had tried her best to help them learn by various means. Nevertheless, in the process of shifting the problem from the discipline of classroom order to an instructional one, she suffered from even greater disappointment in her interactions with the students:

> The class last year had very poor response. They did not use their brains. They felt very annoyed whenever you instructed them do anything. I had tried to improve their level by printing more worksheets, but they felt that you gave them additional work. Of course you would feel very unhappy when you received such feedback. Last year I was very unhappy all the time because I did not know what I was teaching. Somehow I wanted to help them, but whenever I saw their feedback ... [When] you punished them for not handing in their homework and you kept them after school, they had a feeling of hatred to me as they did not know why I had to keep them. I felt that I had a very low identity. (p.2, ln.9-21)

At first she had tried to assist students to keep up a standard, but soon she found that their responses showed great reluctance to fulfilling her requirements.

Students had a completely different perspective from what she thought. The perceptions she had of students by the end of the first year was that the latter did not want to learn anything. She wanted to help them but the response received was annoyance and frustrations. In the process she failed to arouse them to learn, and it even affected her work experience as reflected in her low sense of identity.

The impotence of making the class learn was intense from her accounts. Two incidents were recalled during interview that helped concretize her feeling and show the feeling was accumulated over time:

> I teach them English. They do not even know how to spell the word "car". Then I thought: "if you do not know how to spell this word, then you should not know the alphabetic ABCD". It turns out that they do not know how to spell them. So I spent two months to them in spelling ABCD for five times. After a week, when a teacher somehow punishes a student to write down ABCD in the blackboard, the latter had already forgotten them. When their level is so low, I feel very difficult to teach them. They have great problems in concentrating their attention. (p.8 ln.10-18)

> In art lessons, I remember I have asked them to draw a 7.5cm square. It turns out that half of the class does not know how to draw it. They say "Miss, where is 7.5? Which side is the cm?" They do not even know that the black marks denotes the inch scale and the red marks represents the cm scale. Well, after teaching them all these, they still do not know how to draw a square. It is because a couple of students raise their hands and say they do not know how to draw a square. You cannot imagine it, and they are not kidding. They really mean that they do not know it. So you can imagine how poor their standards are. You cannot teach them from the level of kindergarten. Therefore the situation is very confusing, and you do not know how to help them. You can find no ways. (p.9, ln.8-21)

Here it can be seen that the academic level of the students were so low that even when they attempted to learn seriously they would encounter great difficulty. The significance of these episodes presented by her, however, should be seen from the perspective of how she showed a sense of inefficacy. In the first incident, the frustration did not rest on that students did not know the alphabets. After all, she had

come to predict it. The point leading to disappointment was that the students had forgotten all of the alphabets she had taught them for so long only in a week's time. The sense of failure was that she found herself impotent to make them learn anything. What she had done in two months' time was found in vain only a week later.

In the second episode, the significance was that she could not find a starting point to teach the class. She was so depressed to find that students studying Form 2 could not figure out the marks of a ruler and they had no idea of what a square looked like. To her surprise, the assignment considered as very basic for her was already a very complex task in the eyes of students. As a result, she was so confused to find a way to teach the class.

In face of the situation, she had sought help from colleagues but found them unhelpful. The strategies of other teachers she learnt were useless to improve the academic performance of students:

> Some teachers are very stern to students; they hit them. So the students conform only behaviorally, and they show no improvements in their academic results. To those teachers who do not use corporal punishment, they become naughty in class. They had no improvement on both academic and behavioral aspects. In the former aspect basically I do not know how to help them. (p.10, ln.11-18)

In her second year teaching, she happened to have the opportunity of teaching an A class. Initially she had some expectations on improving their academic dimension, but she found herself falling back to the same feeling again:

> Initially when I take up class A I am thinking of improving their results in this class. But it turns out that I have to lower my standard day by day. Looking at their results and learning attitudes, I realized that they are completely unable to do so. If you teach them in a way which treat them as band one students, then you would waste all these effort. They are impossible [to learn in that way]. (p.7, ln.18-25)

The successive waves of frustrations had led her to feel despair in improving their academic performance. Therefore she tried to obtain satisfaction from

successful control of their behaviours in classroom.

> [To those students disturbing the class] I will kick them to the back of the classroom. I told them to hand in all the homework and meet the requirements I have set to them. But I will not care whether they can listen to what I say or whether they have actually understood what I teach. They cannot talk in class and disturb me. I am teaching only the few rows in the front of the class. (p.5, ln.25 to p.6, ln.1)

Ex-communication was the strategy she finally employed to those students who do not want to learn. If they disturbed the classroom order, punishment was the only method they would foresee.

At present, her orientation has underwent changes in that instruction is not an important goal in teaching any more:

> You would only lower your standards continuously to a level where there are only obedience and respect. I think that is all that they can do. (p.7, ln.11-15)

The Case of Peter

Peter had taught in the school for more than twenty years. He had worked in a factory as a foreman supervising front-line workers for a short period, but he soon left the job due to the boring job nature. Then he entered the teaching profession and came to teach here after he had taught in another school for a year.

He thought that the most rewarding thing from the job was through the good results obtained by students. Using an economic analogy, satisfaction meant that the returns from students was greater than the cost put into them:

> If you were a teacher, usually you would not be contented with earning the salary of the month. For some time, you would see whether you had satisfaction from the job. For instance, if you observed the students you taught had improvements in the conducts and academic performances of students, and they obtained good results in public examinations, then it was the returns to us. That is, our efforts could be harvested. (p.10, ln.14-21)

Applying this formula to his teaching career, he considered that the feeling of the first stage of his career was quite ambivalent:

> At the time when I first taught here, I was teaching mainly on junior classes, and few of them were classes of Form 3 or Form 4. At the first ten years, I had few chances of contact with senior forms. If I used that [criteria] as the first stage, then I felt that I could not obtain a sense of encouragement from the success [of students] directly. You were teaching lower forms, and the students continued their study into higher forms. Then they participated in the public exams and they got good results. It seemed that the merits [of the good results] were from the teachers teaching them directly at the year of public exams; it had nothing to do with the teachers in their lower forms. At that moment I had a feeling that, "well, those students [obtaining good results] seemed to have nothing directly with my work". ... Of course I thought that it was not the case because if those students did not have a solid foundation in their lower forms they would have many obstacles in higher forms. But it appeared that there was no satisfaction from direct participation. (p.13, ln.24 to p.14, ln.12)

To him, the ambivalence of the feeling of satisfaction came from the indirect participation to those students having good results. The sense of efficacy for him was not so strong because he could not relate the success of students directly to his work in classroom. The vague sense of connecting the two phenomenon, i.e., student success and his work in classroom, was the source of his ambivalence.

His second stage of career, starting with teaching higher forms, was filled with success and satisfaction. Students were eager to study and they showed improvements in their academic performance. In public examinations they were able to obtain good grades. The interpretation of directly associating his effort and the performance of students was the source of satisfaction. He had golden memories on these days:

> I remember a year, it seems that the year is 1985, that it was the first time I taught Physics of Higher Level. It happened that I had taught a students from Form 4 onwards. At that year he sat for the Higher Level Examination on Physics and got an A, and it was an A1. In those students who could get an A1, if I had correct memory, there were only 16 of them. He was the one of them. ... Such enjoyable feelings could not be described in words.

> In 1987, I taught the science of a class in Form 5 in which all of them were repeaters. The students of the class had very positive attitude of learning. It turned out that they had very good results in public examination. In another year 1989, I taught a class of Maths, and none of them failed in the public examination. The above incidents were remarkable in my life [of teaching career], that meant I could got some harvest. (p.15, ln.6-24)

The third phase of his career was in sharp contrast to the above stages. The difference did not reside on whether the efforts could be reaped directly; instead the whole point of whether there was satisfaction from the job had been questioned fundamentally. The blessing from having the opportunity to teach higher forms turned out to be a curse:

> In the decade of 90s, although I was still teaching students of higher forms, their attitude of learning or their quality were worse than previous years. So year by year the results from public examinations were declining. At that period, I had a feeling of failure. I did not know whether it was because my skills in teaching had been deteriorating or it was because of the quality of students. (p.14, ln.21-28)

He felt that he could not make students achieve good results in public examinations, and the sense of frustration in turn jeopardized his competence in teaching. Instead of pushing them to have better performance, he sought to make concessions with his previous teaching style in order to maintain a manageable classroom order:

> When I taught the good students in the past, I would give them 7 to 8 questions related to the curriculum on the lesson as homework. There were very few problems for them, if any, and usually I had to use several minutes only to solve their queries. But if I employ the same method to the present group of students, it was completely unsuitable for them. To say honestly, it was an unknown on the amount of materials that students could absorb in class. They did not know what you teach, and when you gave them homework to do, they could not even comprehend the question due to their poor standard in English. Then they could not finish them. So if the situation continued, there would be a vicious cycle. They could not learn and accomplish anything, and then you punished them because they could not hand in their homework. The relationships then became worse off and it resulted in disturbing the class.

> As a result, I had to change the way I taught students with good academic quality. For instance, there was 40 minutes in a lesson. I would use half of them to teach the syllabus, and to illustrate them with examples in the blackboard. The remaining time was reserved for their homework. Usually the homework should be done at home, but I allowed them to do in class because they could not do it at home and could ask nobody when they encountered problems. In addition, the questions I gave them were very similar to what I had just taught in the class. As a result, they could just follow the steps demonstrated on the blackboard, and they could ask me in case of any queries. Students felt that they could accomplish the work and had a sense of success, so they were willing to learn and then they would not disturb the classroom order. (p.5, ln.22 to p.6, ln.28)

Although the method could induce the motivation of students to learn, the sense of failure in his job could not be compensated from such compromise:

> [With regard to satisfaction from teaching] I think the feeling of being in a loss still came from the results of students. That is, you paid much effort to teach them, but found that they did not whole-heartedly participate and absorb what you taught. It was the most important reason that constituted my feeling of frustration. (p.11, ln.8-12)

The sense of inefficacy caused by the declining standard of students resulted in shifting his source of satisfaction from instruction to discipline:

> I thought we must consider what quality of students we have. If the standards were already very poor, then there was no point in expecting their results. It was impossible to do so. In addition to their poor results, most of them had discipline problems verbally and behaviorally, especially students in Form 4. Therefore I thought that if we could improve their conduct, it was already equivalent to their success from academic performance. Of course we did not mean that we would abandon altogether their academic aspect, but if we could not manage the class well, they would not be able to learn anything, nor would there be any improvements in their results. Therefore we stressed the priority of discipline. Their changes in speech and behaviour would be considered by us as having a sense of satisfaction. (p.5, ln.12-23)

The cases have shown that some teachers shift their objective of teaching from instruction to discipline. It is thus necessary to examine in detail how the latter aspect influences the actions and attitudes of teachers, which is the core question of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Culture and Efficacy in Disciplining Students

Few teachers will deny that the first and foremost task of a teacher in classroom is to maintain a type of order. Hargreaves (1972) defines it as the disciplinarian sub-role of a teacher, which is the expectations of a teacher to establish and maintain the discipline and order in the classroom. In establishing rules of who may do what at what time, the teacher is exhibiting that he is in control of the classroom. It is particularly important since it forms the basis upon which other activities can be conducted.

Discipline problem is hardly free from any schools. Rather, it is the degree of prevalence which differentiates one school from another.[9] At one extreme, it is considered as an individual problem: it is the result of the inability of one or a few teachers. In this case, they have to take remedial actions promptly or else they must leave the job. At the other extreme, the problem is perceived as having a collective nature. It affects the school as a whole and the source of the problem lies in factors other than individual teachers. The present case belongs to the latter type. The

[9] Of course, the degree of the prevalence is subject to the effect of its social context. Becker (1952) noted that the nature of discipline varies according to the social classes. In Hong Kong, the banding system performs similar differentiation function as discussed by Becker. Cheung (1991) has argued that the aim of education after the enforcement of compulsory education has shifted from the idea of "selection" to "service", and that banding system leads to a greater heterogeneity of student behaviour among schools of different bands.

genesis of the problem does not reside in the inability of any single teacher to deal with students properly. Instead there are exogenous factors accounting for the general deterioration of school order, and some of them have been discussed in the earlier chapter.

The collective-individualistic nature of discipline problem is coincident with the context upon which it is tackled. The collective nature of the problem is dealt with at school level. At this level, the main concern is that the school authority over student conduct as a whole is being jeopardized. Without taking the argument as extreme as Metz (1978) that the essence of education and discipline are inherently contradictory, frequent infringements of school regulations outside the classroom do pose threats to the reputation of the school. In this case, the school is considered as a unit in which policies are implemented to keep track of the expected worsening situation.

Individual teachers, on the other hand, are much more concerned with the classroom level in which they have to face a class of students in an isolated setting. Constant rule-breaking in classroom by students can seriously demolish their competence in controlling the class. In addition, other objectives that needs to be achieved such as instruction will be hindered.

Separate analysis at the two levels, however, does not mean that they are unrelated. On the contrary, the problem which is prevalent at school level will affect enormously what happens inside the classroom. A channel comes from the intake of students which leads to enhanced probability of directly challenging the classroom order. Another route is that inadequate school support increases the burden of teachers in their classrooms. Put it another way, if the school can absorb most of the

student problems, then teachers need not put additional time and effort to deal with particular problematic students in classrooms. These arguments will be unfolded and elaborated in subsequent sections.

The discussion in the following sections will roughly correspond to the above two levels of analysis. First, the school as a unit will be discussed to show how it tries to deal with the student order as a whole through various policies. Next, teachers as a collective unit is focused to grasp their interpretation of the environment. Then, individual teacher careers are presented to capture the interaction process through which their attitude is shaped.

Discipline Problem at School Level

Maintaining order has been singled out as the most important objective in school especially in recent years. Due to inadequate official statistics on the discipline records of students, the trend of the discipline problem over time cannot be demonstrated here. Nevertheless, the picture can be reconstructed through the narratives of some experienced teachers. In an account of negative feeling about teaching arising from discipline problem, an experienced teacher who has taught for over 20 years recalls,

> About three year ago I taught the Maths of 4C, and the whole class of students came from other schools. They came from all other places and, we can say, all of them were poor academically. In addition, they had very poor discipline here because they already had very loose discipline in their own schools. Therefore when they lose motivation to learn they would not concentrate any more on listening to what you say. They would also ignore your principle of doing things. So what do they do in the classroom? Just fooling around, talking and playing. Therefore it is the first time in my teaching career that had the feeling of "disguise", that is, losing interest when mentioning to teach 4C. (Peter, p.4-5)

Discipline problems made him feel sour and he lost interest in teaching after twenty years of teaching! The main cause of the disaster, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is attributed to an exogenous factor: the intake of increasing portion of academically and behaviorally poor students. As a result, teachers in general find students increasing out of control in classrooms.

Although not all teachers had such dramatic experience, the feeling of the changes in general is still obvious and can be felt by many teachers. A typical comment can be heard like this:

> The types of hardship changes. In the past the hardship is to have additional lessons on students, to work harder in the hope that they can have better results in public exams. But now the hardship is that you have to use extra time to have guidance on them, or you have to bear what they say, even though it is a word or two. (David, p.7)

The school has developed policies in recent years in order to adjust to the worsening situation. As a reality-definer, the present principal is an important figure in this reform. His power to initiate policies and programme forces us to investigate his ideas on the issue. In general, his philosophy about student discipline as reflected in school policies can be summarized into two colloquial phases: "discipline before teaching" and "strict discipline loose punishment".

The phase "discipline before teaching" is a maxim in CSS. It is heard from the mouth of the principal, experienced and new teachers down to the newly appointed school librarian. It is announced by the principal at staff meetings, at Form 1 Parents Day meeting and at the orientation activities organized for new teachers. As early as the first time I talked to the principal about the details of conducting a research here, my attention had been led by an incident showing the special attention the principal paid to the discipline and behaviours of the students:

> After a brief account of the research, we continued to chat at the canteen. At that time two students came across and said hello to the principal. The first thing the principal commented to them was on their clothing. He told a student to fasten the buttons of the shirt and told them to prepare to have the hair cut. "We want you here to study happily, not to punish you". he said. Before dismissal he reminded them to come on Wednesday to attend the test on time [to allocate which class they belong to]. (fieldnotes, 16 July, 1994)

In spite of its prevalence, it should be made clear that not all students in CSS are trouble-makers. The vicious cycle described in the previous chapter has suggested that there are some forms which have particularly serious problems. Students in various forms as well as classes make a difference.

The streaming process has a definite effect on influencing the degree of troublesome students in various classes. Although in recent years all students of the non-elite classes are mixed into classes B and C, there is a period where students in class C are concentrated with most academic and behavioral problems, and it accounts for the majority of discipline cases done by students in class C. On the contrary, students from class A have lowest percentage of behavioral problems.

Table 5 Distribution of Disciplinary Cases in 1993/4 by Classes

Class	Number of students	Percentage
A	26	14.6
B	48	26.9
C	104	58.5
Total	178	100.0

Although there are some experienced teachers who are competent enough to deal with all types of students, not all teachers here actually can stand for the poor discipline in classes B and C. For instance a teacher had made a deal with herself that

> if the school allocates poor classes to me, I will not stay here because I cannot manage the discipline [of the classes]. Really, it is the only thing that I will leave. It is because you cannot stand for the pressure. The students are very naughty and impolite. I cannot endure it. (Margret, p.8, ln.21-26)

With regard to variations among different forms, students in Form 1 in general deserves special attention from teachers. As tables 6 and 7 show, most of the discipline problems are treated as problems requiring guidance, so the percentage of discipline cases are comparatively lower than other forms. On the contrary, students in Form 1 consist of the largest proportion who have to receive guidance concerning discipline problems.

Table 6 Distribution of Students Requiring Guidance in 1993/4 by Form

Form	Number of students
1	9
2	6
3	0
4	3
5	3
6 and 7	0
Total	21

Table 7 Classification of Cases Requiring Guidance in 1993/4

Items	First priority	Second priority
Learning problem	2	2
Conduct problem	14	11
Family problem	1	7
Emotional problem	4	0
Problem in social relation	0	1
Total	21	21

Students in Form 3 and Form 4 have special problems because those in Form 3 think that they do not have much to afraid about teachers and those in Form 4 who came from other schools have difficulties in adapting the new school environment.

Table 8 Distribution of Disciplinary Cases in 1993/4 by Form

Form	Number of students	Percentage
1	20	11.2
2	43	24.1
3	48	27.0
4	58	32.5
5	8	4.4
6 and 7	1	0.0
Total	178	100.0

The statistics of the above table is further evidenced by the remarks the principal has made on why the Form 4 students from other schools may pose discipline problems to the school. To them, discipline is the first and foremost task to be achieved:

> Many students came from Ma On Shan and Tai Po last year. Because of the bad habits developed during the past three years, they gave teachers here great disturbances. At first the teachers here did not know how to teach them. However, they gradually came to adapt to our method. ... Then there was not many problems on their discipline, and we observed that they had changes. We are happy about that, ... the academic side is forced to be taken up step by step, because we cannot teach them if we cannot keep their discipline. (p.5)

With the discipline of students as the most important goal, many school policies are established to gain the behavioral conformity of students in school. They are set up in order to monitor the conduct of students in every aspects from the time they enter the school until they bell rang at 3:45 p.m.. Since most of them are

geared towards controlling behaviours of students outside classroom, a metaphor is employed which differentiates the school into two context for students, that is, the classroom context where learning is taking place and the non-classroom context where they could relax and play (Woods, 1979).

The school bell in CSS has more meaning than merely a transition from one context to another. The practice of lining up before entering the classroom marks a ritual as well as a kind of control to students.

Upon studying in CSS for a week or two, it becomes a habit for students to line up at the basketball field. When the head of discipline team stood up at the stage and spoke through the loud speaker, students know that they have to line up at the assigned places awaiting for announcement three times a day. They come to do so in the morning assembly, after recess and lunch time. The teachers who have to teach the following classes as well as prefects also assist in maintaining the order of the students. After all students have lined up, there will be announcements made usually by the discipline head and sometimes by the principal. Then they will be led by teachers to their classrooms.

The idea of keeping students in order is not lessened even at times of fun. An instance in point can be seen from the Christmas party held at the last teaching day of the first term. At that day there were no classes but a series of programmes such as dramas and singing performed by different forms. The carpark of the school was used as the stage for performance while students would sit on the football field. On that day, students have to arrive at their classrooms at 8:00 as usual. They were sent one by one by the classmasters, and each of them brought their own chair to the football field. The chairs were arranged in a way that each class occupied a vertical

line. The programme then began to start after all students were settled down. After all the programmes have finished, they were not allowed to leave immediately. Instead, they were sent back one class by another to the classroom first, which was accompanied by their class masters. Making sure that all students were back to their classrooms in good order, then the bell rang signalling that they could leave.

In one sense, the practice of lining up before having classes is an analogy to the idea of "discipline before teaching": students have to keep a proper manner and attitude before entering the classroom to learn. Exerting control through the practice, which denotes changes from the mode of playing to one of learning in classrooms, is important as it helps alleviate the trouble of keeping students quiet in classrooms. What it implies is that good order of lining up makes the work of teaching in classroom easier:

> I think lining up means holding your mind back. If you have quiet lining up, you can immediately teach after they have sat down in the classroom. But if you cannot manage their order completely, let them play and talk in their way of walking back into the classroom, then when you enter the classroom, you can have no say about their order. (Esther, p.4)

If the rule of lining up carries with the meaning that a kind of control is necessary in changing from the mode of playing to learning, the system of patrol by teachers signifies that even the sphere of play by students cannot be freed from surveillance.

The patrol system, which is initiated by the principal, began from last year. Initially only one teacher was responsible for the patrol whereas in this year one more teacher is assigned. Their timetable for duty has been arranged at the beginning of the year and usually they have to be on duty once a month. The duties of the role include patrolling during lunch time and after school to ensure that students are not

fighting or smoking in hidden places. In lunch time, a teacher patrols around the school campus and the other one walks around to keep students out of classrooms such that the latter cannot play or have their lunch there. After school, one of them stations outside the school whereas the other one walks to the bustop to make sure that students can get on the bus properly.

In addition to the above policies, other measures are initiated to strengthen the conception of students on keeping discipline in one way or the other. For instance, the setting up of the "behaviour award scheme" intends to encourage students to improve their behaviour in classrooms while the whole-school guidance program carried out in Form 1 brings out different messages such as the courtesy in September and October and tidiness in January and February.

Useful as it may be, the strict school policies may elicit opposite effect of strong resistance from students. In view of this drawback the school has developed another policy known as "strict discipline loose punishment".

The policy of loose punishment may be reflected in a rough way through the discipline record last year. The quasi-statistics of discipline record last year revealed that among 176 cases 98 of them (55.6%) had been warned orally while 78 of them (44.4%) had been given additional punishment such as grade demerit. The figure that over half of the punishment is taken in such mild form becomes understandable under the above policy even the school is facing serious discipline problems. Among them are some of the incidents receiving oral warnings:

30/9 : Class 3C. Fighting in canteen because some students spoke one's nickname.
15/10: Class 3B. Talking unceasingly in class. Eventually singing in the classroom.
21/3 : Class 3C. Throwing explosive material to the school mailbox.
18/5 : Class 3B. Slept in class. Impolite to the teacher. Oral warning. Detention.

The principal is also proud of the fact that no students had been kicked out of

the school during his headship.

The policy is set out explicitly by the discipline team and used as an orientation towards disciplining students. Here the introduction of the notice given by the team at the beginning of the school year represents their views:

> Rigid rules and methods would only bring about resistance and antagonistic attitude from students, and this would bring teachers with even greater difficulty. Here we want all teachers to have a consensus: to give opportunities, understanding and guidance to rule-breaking students. To employ the care, tolerate and open attitude of a school educator to them. But tolerance does not mean that students could do whatever they want to. To those students who do not improve and infringing intentionally, we must handle them seriously. ...
> Our principle is that: be as strict as possible in managing students and be tolerant as it could during punishment. Adequate opportunities and warning should be provided before punishment. In this process, suitable guidance is necessary so that the students being punished after the above process would not have the feeling of being [punished wrongly] and it would mitigate conflicts and enmities between teachers and students. (p.1)

The rationale of this idea is that students have the ability to convert and that continuous warnings could help them improve. It also conveys a message to students that what teachers do is for their interests. These values are represented clearly from the following transcript by a teacher in the discipline team:

> What we mean by strict is that we must scold you if you have forgotten to bring the school badge so that you know it is your fault. Nevertheless, we will not stress on punishing the student because we emphasize on giving opportunities to him. For instance, in case that a student is untidy about his school uniform, we would drop down his name and warn that he would be punished if he offends again. We hope that for every time the student fails to meet the demand on school rules, teachers will talk to him so that he would gradually develop the habit of obeying school rules. ... From the time Chinese people is appointed to be the principal, our policy has shifted to "strict discipline loose punishment". We discover that the policy would not lead to the worsening of school order nor lowering of the student consciousness about obeying rules. On the contrary, we felt that adopting this method to deal with students who are infringing rules would make them easier to accept. They know that you want them to behave well instead of having the feeling that "you merely only want to punish me". (Peter, p. 9-10)

In his view, the policy of "strict discipline loose punishment" is effective enough to steer students towards following rules obediently.

Taken as a whole, the school has implemented many policies in trying to keep the school order under control. The principal considers that the policies are improving to some extent. In the review of last year's school performance, it writes, "the discipline and conduct of our students are satisfactory in this school year. There are no serious problems such as drug abuse, illegal assaulting and suicidal cases". It seems that behaviours of students in the school are under control.

After presenting briefly about the school policies towards student discipline, it is time to have a look on the issue from the angle of teachers. Since the effectiveness of the policies can be manifested only through the enforcements by teachers, how the latter interprets the policies then becomes important to whether the original intentions of the policies can be carried out. The following section is towards a dissection of these issues.

Teachers' Perceptions towards Disciplining Students

It should be emphasized repeatedly that the major problems for a teacher resides in the classroom. It means that teachers tend to assess the values of these policies from the perspective of how effective they succeed in improving the classroom order. Seen in this way, the classroom context is the ultimate source to judge the above school policies.

Frustrations, complaints and cynical jokes about discipline problems of students are heard everyday in the staffroom in spite of industrious efforts put by the school. Teachers are often discussing with class masters about the misconduct of

students in class and it seems that it is part of their lives in handling these issues. As an observer, however, this seemingly taken for granted practices are shocking. The following fieldnotes question the nature of teaching activities taking place behind the classroom doors:

> I walked passed 2A and I saw Stephen teaching EPA. The students were playing, joking and talking to each other. Stephen said, "looking at the class as a whole, there was no one listening to what I say". He then resumed teaching, but as long as he began to speak, students immediately talked, and Stephen had to resort to maintaining order and scolded the students. He does not permit students to go to the toilet, probably as a way to take revenge. He continued to talk about "freedom of speech in an open society" in a way of just reciting the materials in the textbook, but the students resumed talking. (fieldnotes, 21 Oct., 94)

> At 3:35, I walked around the corridor and heard some teachers conducting their lessons. The class was 2A and the subject was about integrated science. Students were talking while the teacher was teaching by reciting what the textbook said. The teacher tried to control the class by making slight remarks -- but some were still talking. Then I heard the sound of writing on the blackboard. There were some occasional remarks such as "Don't Move". Then I heard that the teacher and students are talking about singing contest, and then there resumed teaching. "Next question", the teacher said. A student spoke out the answer and the teacher elaborated. Students resumed talking loudly. The teacher told students to do some drawing. Then the teacher spoke out some names, to tell them to stay after school. While the teacher was speaking the names, two bags were sent out to the outside of the classroom through another door. A student looked at me from the classroom. Two students took their bags outside and slipped away but they soon went back to the classroom. Then there were roars and the class was without order, and teachers had to keep students sit down. The bell rang. Three students [one from 2A, another from the adjacent class] rushed out but they were ordered to stay in their seats. (fieldnotes, 24 Oct., 94)

> After interviewing with David in the guidance room, I walked around to see how teachers were teaching. Most of them were talking to students of the first two rows only. Other students were playing and laughing. But they are not making loud voices so that most of the teachers just ignored them. (fieldnotes, 4 Nov., 94)

Though illustrative, these fragments cannot be over-represented to prove that all teachers are suffering from discipline problem. The result of a small survey on teachers' opinions is thus employed to shed light on the prevalence of the problem.

In a question asking what constitutes the source of stress for them, 11 out of 16 teachers considered discipline problem as one of the most important three sources of stress. Among them 8 teachers felt that it is the main source of their stress in teaching here.

The account of a teacher here illustrates the kinds of trick students play in the classroom that constitutes discipline problems for teachers:

> Using a ruler to pierce students, student at the back kicks the chair in front of him; wrap paper to throw other classmates; taking possessions of things from other students; to speak in class, of course; fighting each other; asking nonsense questions in class; giving unconstructive answers, and sleeping. (Samuel, p.23)

Their primary concern with the student is consistent with that of the school on the idea of "discipline before teaching": without a good classroom order, teachers are unable to teach and raise the academic performances of students.

In a question directly addressing their priority of different objectives, most of the teachers consider that academic performance rank below other aims.[10] The result of the survey shows that 10 out of 15 teachers regard behavioral improvements and learning proper values by students as more important than their improvements on academic performance.

Their perceptions of the source of stress is another important indicator. If they regard the part of instruction as a vital component in their job, then the failure to achieve it would be reflected in form of stress. A first glance of the survey results suggests that the problem gains the same weight as that of instruction problems

[10] Since every teacher has their own standard of evaluating the relative importance of the above three aspects, the data is analyzed by comparing their ratings on them by individual teachers. A comparison is made in each questionnaire (representing each teacher) on their evaluation of the three aspects. Then the number of teachers who rated behavioral and moral aspects more than academic improvements are counted.

because 10 out of 15 teachers consider poor academic quality of students as one of their main sources of stress. When their ranking on the importance is taking into account, a new scenario appears. Only one of them thought that instruction constitutes the major source of stress; most of them rank it as the least important. In contrast, 8 out of 11 teachers put discipline as their first priority. Hence it gives further support to the contention that teachers consider the problem of academic performance as relatively unimportant in their work, which is found to be a typical comment from this teacher:

> Q: What expectations do you have on this class [2B] ?
> T: I had set myself at the lowest expectation, that is, hoping that there can be improvements in the classroom order.
>
> Q: You consider it as the most important problem.
> T: Yes, exactly. That is, besides teaching the curriculum there are other behavioral problems and moral judgment that you have to teach. But if you cannot manage the classroom order, how could you speak these to them? At least you must be able to handle them before teaching them from another angle.
>
> Q: That means you don't have much expectation on them.
> T: You cannot have much expectations. (Treasa, p.7)

From the evidence, it can be concluded that teachers in general side with the objective of the school that student discipline is the most important goal, and they find great difficulty in achieving this aim. The sailence of the problem shared by most of the teachers suggests that it does not reside on the incapability of any individual teacher in dealing with students. Talks and interviews with teachers reveal other reasons for the problem. Here the values of the teachers begin to diverge from those of the school.

Some teachers feel discontent because the school is not strict enough to discipline the behaviour of students. Rules in some aspects are not well established, as the following teacher recounts the effects of abolishing the system of punishing

students who litter:

> For example, I observe that the problem of dropping litter does not show any improvement since September. I have discussed with the principal for about three or four times. I think the system of litter volunteer should be restored. That is, to find some students ... to patrol the black points. ... If you observe those who litter, you can catch him and make him pick up the rubbish themselves. Previously we have a system of punishing those students for a week to pick up rubbish so that they would not do so afterwards. But if you just ask them not to litter, well, Hong Kong Government also asks people not to litter, but there are rubbish all over the streets. Therefore we have to catch those students. In this respect I think the discipline team is not doing enough. (Barnabas, p.18-19)

Dropping litter is an aspect where the lack of rules has created troubles for the school. But there are other aspects where rules are not enforced strictly enough. The following teacher gives an example of such inadequacies:

> Loose punishment is not a problem, but the point is whether you are strict in disciplining them. Personally I think at present it is not strict enough. Students are very noisy when they are lining up. Somehow I have heard the principal said some people praise that students have very quiet lining up. I think it is not correct. I don't know whether you have not noticed, but I really think that the students here are very noisy when queuing. No matter they are higher forms or lower forms, they are talking and playing when walking along the stairs. When they see you, they say, "hi, sir; hi, miss". Actually these are orders. I always talk to them, "you do not need to greet to me. If you want to show that you are polite, all you have to do is just to give a knot to me. It has already meant a kind of respect, a kind of politeness, a way of showing kindness." If every student say hello to teachers, it is impossible for them not to get into trouble. Therefore I think it must be stricter in their discipline. (Esther, p.10-11)

In her view, students are always finding margins to escape from the rules set by the school. As a result, the rules must be subject to constant and detailed enforcement so that the chance of having troubles can be minimized.

The deficiency of the policies is compounded with the deteriorating effect from the policy of "strict discipline loose punishment". The discontent with it does not mean that teachers in general are merciless to the students, however. The root of the complaint rests on the influence of the policy on their classroom order. The following teacher explains the rationale behind the grievances:

> What is meant by strict discipline and loose punishment? A first sight of the two phases would suggest that they are imbalance. You are strict to discipline them; and they would well-behave if they are good. But how about if they are not good? You have to give some punishment. You don't have to, but you must give them suitable punishment because what is the level of being loose, we don't know. Most of the time we discover that, it is right that we are always scolding them, but they are not afraid. Why? Because there is no punishment. We always scold them, even the principal would occasionally go into the classroom to scold the bad guys. They would of course behave well in front of the principal because he could control their fortunes. But when they come back to the classroom they still behave badly because they are not receiving threats. You just scold me, and I would be OK when I am doing good in front of the principal. (Margret, p.9)

In her view, students are good at playing tricks in front of different people. The policy of loose punishment has given them a chance to play against one another so that they could keep on disturbing others in class without having severe punishments. Strict discipline is ineffective without the backing up of punishment. It is echoed by another teacher:

> I think our school is too lenient. We always say to give chance to students, but we are not giving opportunities to those students who want to learn. Because we are alone to face so many students, if every class has a few of students like that [always infringing the classroom order], then we can't teach. I think if the school authority holds tighter on discipline, we will have an easier job. (Matthew, p.10)

By being lenient to rule-breaking students, insufficient punishment results in hindering those students who want to learn. It also puts teachers in a more difficult situation to handle the classroom order.

Obviously, this image of student is in sharp contrast to the one held by the discipline team members. The acquisition of such image, however, is not from theory and comments of colleagues alone. They are rooted from continual interactions with students, as the following teacher reveals:

> I have always thought of letting them learn how to self-discipline themselves. It is the best way when you can control yourself. But I find out that the most effective method is punishment. It is ineffective to gain their self-discipline. They would gradually learn that some things can be tolerated [if you let them learn self-discipline] and they would become worse in time. I have tried on that, especially in my class. I said to them oftenly that I do not want to punish them and hope they will learn how to self-discipline themselves. But just the moment after what you have said, they instinct emerges. You discover that you must punish them. I have thought of punishing them less initially because they would correct themselves gradually. But it is not the case: they are worsening. I am now observing that my class is becoming worsen off. (Maria, p.16, p.8-20)

Under the policy, teachers in help find themselves receiving inadequate support for discipline. They have to handle the misconduct of students individually, thus placing much burden to them.[11] A teacher puts his comments in this way,

> M: For example, many naughty students should be dealt with by the discipline team, but most of the time I have to handle them by myself. So I feel quite difficult [to do that]. ... For instance in last week a student played fire during maths lesson. He suddenly took out a lighter, "chak", then to burn his book. The students around him smelt it and reported to the teacher. Then I went to take up the case, and punish him for a week. That means I had to punish myself for a week.
>
> Q: But have you brought the case to discipline team?
> M: Yes, but they have no actions. And I can't tolerate it. (Maria, p.3, ln.26 to p.4, ln.7)

Another staff also sighed on the ineffectiveness of the school in assisting her work of disciplining students:

> How [can the discipline team] give support to you? Unless they are very cooperative. That is, for example, if I transfer a student to them, they would punish the students severely. But the way of handling students here gives me an impression that in the aspect of discipline, it is mainly in the form of persuasion. It is more than punishing them. So I have the feeling that the power of threat is not great here. (Treasa, p.3, ln.20-25)

[11] In the question "how adequate is the support from discipline to your teaching here", five teachers consider the support inadequate, six of them consider it adequate and the rest of them takes a neutral stance. The diverse pattern found is explained by the fact that the question may lead one to confound between support from the school and support from other teachers.

Another teacher also has similar comments:

> For instance, some of the students speak foul language in classroom and we transfer the cases to the discipline team. Most of the time we find out that there is not much follow up. The most that is done is to suspend them for two or three days, or to give them a grade demerit. It is not so helpful because the students do not afraid of that. They know that basically you have no ways to control them. They are back the day after punishment, which speaks to other students that the most that [discipline team] can do is to suspend them for one or two days. That is not a problem. (Matthew, p.9 ln.11-18)

The school policy has been interpreted by teachers as one which helps little in alleviating their burden in maintaining classroom order. In sharing the same goal, resources are not provided adequately to achieve it. Under this circumstance, teachers have to resort to their own strategies. It has been noted above that teachers in general consider punishment as the most effective means to discipline students. However, the pattern of association among teachers have directed us into the view that mainly two broad kinds can be delineated: one is on a collective level while the other is on an individual level.

The collective strategies are used to keep the discipline problem solved at the level of class master. A common practice by all teachers in lower forms is the "ticking box" system. A matrix representing the respective seats of students is drawn at the upper left corner of the blackboard in classrooms of every lower forms. If a student infringes the classroom order, the teacher in that class can mark it down by giving a tick to the box representing the student. He will be punished by the class master when there are three ticks on his box.

A modified form of classroom control deriving from the "ticking box" system is observed during the period of participant observation. It was devised by a class master at November and later practised by several other teachers. Transforming

originally from the sheet of handling homework, it is designed to mark in detail the records of students in every lesson. The row consists of the names of students of the class, and there are a number of marks in the column symbolizing different meanings of the students action. A triangle means that the student behaves well in that lesson. A "T" represents talking. An "I" stands for insulting teacher verbally and a "S" for sleeping. A mark of "X" denotes some serious rule-breaking actions and there are spaces for making remarks on the incident. All types of misbehaviour are to be punished by the class master in a uniform manner.

The class master coordinates with all other colleagues teaching his/her class to work out the sheet. It is different from the previous ticking box system in various aspects, which suggests a more intricate control over students. First, teachers can use the symbol of a triangle to represent an affirmation to those students who are attentive in class. Some students may be weak to learn, but they have shown improvement in not disturbing others. The triangle stands for an appraisal to them. Hence under this system, the importance of maintaining classroom order is highlighted more explicitly as absence of disturbing the class can earn rewards. Rewards are provided for those who can collect five triangles in a month, which may be in material form such as stationery or in normative form such as speaking positive comments to parents. Second, it gives more information to the class master on the performance of students in every class so that the latter cannot play tricks by behaving differently in front of various teachers. As a result, a more comprehensive understanding of students' behaviour enables the class master to deal with them in a better way. The advantages are illustrated from the comments of the following teacher:

> I cannot keep track of their misbehaviours on some occasions when the teacher consider the behaviours as minor incidents. A result is that I cannot notice who is becoming naughty over time. With the sheet I can observe the actions of students in every class. ... And the table has the mark of a triangle. You know, it is quite good to some students who have been marked badly that hope to get back a triangle. (Maria, p.20 ln.23 to p.21 ln.24)

In addition to these collective strategies, individual teachers have devised their own strategies to deal with discipline problems of students. The most usual strategy is to disturb students continually such that the latter conform to teachers' demands. Giving detention to students is the most effective means to control their behaviour, but it consumes teachers a lot of time and effort:

> M: Some teachers would use the method of corporal punishment, to hit them really. Then they will follow what you say. ... Well, for those teachers who do not use corporal punishment, they became naughty. There is no behavioral and academic improvement.
>
> Q: So how did you deal with them last year?
> M: Detention. Whenever I speak "detention", [they would say] do not talk, there is detention. And it takes a long time to train them about this too. I was somehow treating them as animals, using operant conditioning. If you behave well, you can leave early; if you are naughty, you have detention. After being trained for a month, they come to know what you really mean to them. They come to know that there must be something you must have done before you are treated as behaving well and can leave early. So I get through it for a year in this way. (Maria, p.10-11)

Compromising with individual students privately is another effective method. A teacher practising this strategy reveals the strength of the method:

> I have a pile of record of student misconduct [of my class], that is, the record which they have written down their misdeeds and kept by me. I have not given them to the discipline team. I think if they are willing to repent, I won't give it to the discipline team. Usually it consists of some trivial matters. ... I will tell them to write it down, then talk to him for a while to see whether the student really want to repent. If so, usually I will keep them up, and say to the student that I won't tell it to the discipline team. But it is subject to a condition: it is that you cannot commit the same mistake again. If so, I would report it with all the past records. Therefore I still have some forms when they are in Form 1. (Timothy, p.20)

In the process the teacher is building up the image to students that he/she is trying to help instead of punishing them, thus enabling him/her to handle the classroom order efficiently without resorting help from the discipline team.

In the following section two cases are chosen to highlight the process of how they become satisfied with disciplining students in classroom. They should be seen as contrasting to psychological explanation of job satisfaction, which argues that the need or disposition of a person would match with the organizational environment so that he would become satisfied with the job. Applying longitudinal method to assert that the satisfaction level of a person persists over time does not in itself prove that it is the personality that makes one inclined to be satisfied with the job. Here a blackbox is found between the time one enters the organization and the time when his attitude is being measured. The two cases here who are satisfied with mere successful discipline relations with students have positive orientations to the teaching profession at the time when they enter the school. In due course of their work, however, they find themselves at times of frustrations and doubt on their self-identity, and it is also through their interaction with the workplace that serve to change their interpretations on the students over time. Bearing in mind the above orientation, we now turn to the careers of the two teachers.

The Case of Matthew

Initially teaching in a primary school after graduation from the College of Education, Matthew came to teach here as the first secondary school two years ago with the attainment of an external degree. In talking about his reason to be a teacher, he maintained that he had determined to enter the profession after Form 7, which reflects his positive orientation to the profession.

When asked about his future planning, he thinks that he "could not find a reason to leave". Absence of struggles and the harmonious relationships with colleagues are major reasons for making up his decision. However, the relation with students plays a crucial role in his consideration, which is not as stable and harmonious as his relation with colleagues.

His satisfaction with the present interaction with students is generated from a process of negotiations and struggles. Recalling the initial experience of contacting students, he felt very shocked and frustrated although he had prior experience of teaching as well as psychological preparation upon entering the school:

> The first two months was very hard for me because I was teaching the worst class when I first came to teach here, i.e., 3B. It was very poor, but it was not about their academic aspect. It was the poor attitude in classroom. (p.4, lines 8-11)

The excerpt reflected two things upon his initial encounter with students. First, the definition of whether teaching was an easy job or a difficult task was constrained by the work environment. The assignment by the school here certainly played a significant part in shaping what kinds of students Matthew had to face. He had been allocated to fight for a very difficult battle in his first year teaching: a class B in form 3. Second, the school also influenced him on what were the major problems to be dealt with highest priority. Matthew had rapidly noted that the most

important problem in this class was not on their academic aspect; it was the classroom order that counts.

Struggling in this class had made him question about his basis of staying in this school. The feeling of confusion and self-doubt, as well as the mixing of some thoughts about leaving the school, revolved his mind at that frustrated stage:

> Sometimes you cannot be accountable to yourself. Those students, why do I have to face them? Well, I could teach at other schools, why do I need to deal with these classes, to be entertained by them? (p.6, ln 11-14)

His teaching career began to turn a new leaf when he could receive helps and assistance from colleagues. The help was perceived as substantial although they did not require direct intervention to his classroom teaching:

> At that time I was lucky to have help from colleagues. At the beginning when I cannot manage the class they would look at it from outside. I remembered when they walked across the classroom, students would feel a little bit afraid. Then after a month or two, I could find a way to handle the students. (p.4, ln 11-17)

As a new teacher, he needed time to build up his authority. The initial period was very crucial to him as it affected directly whether he could manage the classroom subsequently. The significance of this period was that the help from colleagues afforded him to employ inappropriate methods to handle students. At first, he had thought of coercing the class through speaking loudly to them and transferring them to discipline team. However, he soon found out that these methods were ineffective. Gradually Matthew came to learn the importance of appropriate strategies. It consisted of both threatening students through detention and playing with them to gain their acceptance. The learning of the appropriate methods took him about two months:

> For them [students] the most threatening and troublesome thing is to catch up during recess, lunch time and after school. ... They will know where to stop [disturbing the class] because they know that they would be kept for a very long time. ... but you cannot push the method to the extreme. You have to joke and play with them at other times such as chatting and playing football. When you meet them at lunch hour or recess do chat with them like a friend, because nowadays you cannot treat yourself solely as a teacher, ... you have to treat them as a friend. Then they would accept your punishment willingly. (p.5-6)

Step-by-step Matthew gained the sense of efficacy of how to manage the classroom order. It did not mean, however, that the ability could be secured once and for all. He still needed to confront student problems in subsequent periods of his teaching career, but the help from colleagues was not confined to a snap shot either. In an environment where the school authority could not offer much help, continual collegial support was the best choice for keeping his efficacy in handling student problems:

> Q: So it seems that you are dealing with students alone ...
> M: I am not alone to deal with them. For instance, the class master. That is, it must not be through discipline team. You can discuss with the class master, maybe the class master talks to the student after I have punished the student. Or vice versa, the class master punishes first, then I talk to him to see whether it can help, ... that is, the support from colleagues. No support is from school authority, that is, from the discipline and guidance team. (p.11, lines 2-7)

The sense of efficacy enables him to build up his authority and gain respect from students throughout the year. In his decision to stay here, he recalled how he could derive satisfaction from students:

> Although the students are naughty, you are quite happy when you become familiar with them. That is, they would not necessarily be very quite. Even I do not want them to sit down and shut up their mouth completely. That is, we could have sharing. Sometimes they would be noisy, but when I could keep them under control, I think it is quite good. Now they are not a kind of "giving face", that is, they are meant to respect you. They know you need a period of time to teach, so they would spare some time for you to teach in every lesson. Afterwards we would chat together. (p.8, lines 11-21)

To him, successful classroom control was not possible simply by using

coercive power to make them quiet. It can be characterized as a kind of "co-optation" strategy, where "the teacher seeks the willing participation of pupils by incorporating the interest of pupils and using methods of getting them involved in the process of the lesson" (Denscombe, 1985, p.143). Here Matthew did not require the students to be totally silent in the classroom. Instead, it was a kind of personalizing the authority towards students by gaining their respect since mere punishment was not effective. The outcome of a satisfying classroom order involved a process of negotiation and compromise where they were given a certain extent of freedom. However such kind of freedom could be "keep under control" when required. This sense of control became the greatest source of happiness in his job:

> What I demand them to do is totally under my control. About the progress, ... when I heard other teachers say that they are not OK. ... but when I can do it, I feel quite good. (p.14, ln 13-16)

The ability of developing the sense of efficacy in this school even lead him to think that he is suitable for the teaching profession. The contrast of the attitude towards the school in particular and teaching profession in general could be seen with regard to the time when he first taught the class of 3B:

> Which school you go to, the way you want to teach, what to teach, what are the ways to teach the syllabus, you can manage it. That is, to the teaching profession, many things can be controlled. ... You can feel the success and failure. (p.16, ln 8-13)

The Case of Luther

He had made up his mind to work in professions that could deal with adolescents upon his university graduation. His first job, therefore, was on the profession of social work where he worked as an administrative in a social work office. However, the job nature was in great contrary to his expectations and it led

him to have a try on other professions. Then he turned to the teaching profession and became a supply teacher at February from last year. As with his previous thoughts, the opportunity of working with adolescents make him choose this profession:

> Before actual teaching, I like it. At the time when I graduate, I have several choices actually. One is to be a social worker and another is to be a teacher, both of which are having working relationships with the youth. (p.1, ln.17-20)

Without any previous experience on teaching, Luther had a quite idealistic image of what teaching is about:

> I imagine that teaching will be a kind of together with the students. You can teach them the curriculum, you can really teach something to them. You will be living with them happily in school. (p.1 ln.24-26)

His ideals were crashed completely shortly after he went to teach in the classrooms. Instead of actualizing the happy thoughts of school life with the students, the first and foremost problem he had to deal with was the getting lost of classroom control. Feeling frustrated, it preoccupied him with great stress and threats on his identity:

> When I began to teach here initially, it was completely different from what I thought of. You became totally lost control of the students and you could not teach them anything. ... So I was very unhappy at the beginning. (p.1 ln.22-p.2 ln.2)

> Q: Do you experience great pressure in teaching here?
> L: The pressure I am at present experiencing was different from the time when I came to teach here. At that time I did not know how to control the classroom order, so I could not teach anything. That was the source of stress. You had doubts on what you were teaching, that is, you were having doubts on what you are doing. It meant that you did not know what you were doing, and meant that you could not do anything. (p.4, ln.15-19)

It took about two months for him to think about the ways of how to maintain classroom order. Colleagues was vital at his times of frustration as they helped him substantially to deal with the problems of students. Gradually, he had enough

confidence to handle the classroom and abandoned the idea of leaving the job as he could vision possible directions to pursue better. It was reflected in the excerpt during interview:

> Q: Have you thought about how to solve it [student problem]?
> L: At that time I was very annoyed. Initially I did not know how to adjust to it, and I sometimes could not sleep well. But later because I was a new entrant, and the colleagues here would take care of us. They would ask me how far I was doing well and they got to know what problems I had. Also at that time I was the assistant class master of 2B. The class master was John, who always asked me what problems I had in teaching the class. Usually he could give me some advice on the techniques of how to solve the problems in teaching.
>
> Q: Can you give me an example of what he had taught you?
> L: For instance, do not go to the classroom right immediately. You must remain standing outside of the classroom to give a signal to the students that the matter is serious: the teacher felt that it was the time for class. You wait until they become totally quiet before walking in and said "speak up". It was different from what I was doing before: when I walked into the classroom the students were still playing. Some of them were watching newspaper. That was the technical helps that John had mentioned.
>
> Q: How long do you take to adjust to this situation?
> L: I became a supply teacher here in February. Well, the most difficult times were at March. Then there came Easter. After it actually I was still struggling. John and other teachers also gave me some advice, and I also thought of some ways as well. I could say that it was not as difficult as before, but not to mean that I could overcome the problem. It was because I knew afterwards that I needed a period of time to build up my authority, so I felt very difficult during the half year as a supply teacher. At the beginning it was so difficult that you did not know how to handle it, that is, you may probably quit the job. But later you could see that there were some paths that you could do, that means, you could see the direction. Gradually it was better. (p.2 ln.4 - p.3 ln.8)

It is evident here that the characters of being confident and striving for improvements are influenced by the environments he is facing instead of an inborn trait. Here it had shown how Luther acquired the skills and techniques before he could manage to survive in the classroom. Collegial support mediated through his teaching career which acts as a switchman turning him from feeling despair to having

efficacy. As a result, he determined to stay for another year when the principal asked about his decision to stay for next year. The efficacy of maintaining classroom order was a source of satisfaction for him:

> If you ask what is joyful, then [when] you can overcome the difficulties, it is already a happy thing. From the time you don't know how to teach and control a classroom to one where you can manage, well, I feel having satisfaction. (p.6, ln.3-5)

It was only after the building up of such foundation that teaching is possible in classroom. Luther considers that his relationships with students are satisfactory. As the following evidence illustrates, it is not the ability of successful transmitting knowledge that make him feel satisfied. Rather it comes from the sense of having the ability to conduct activities resembling knowledge transmission. He can control the class by means of gaining the acceptance of students on his role as a teacher:

> I consider the relations with the F.5 class because I think that they are accepting my image as a teacher. I think I can really teach them something in class, that is, they are willing to learn although they whether they can learn it is another matter. I feel happy for this, that is, they are accepting the role that you are transmitting knowledge to them, the feeling that you are being with them. (p.6, ln.10-15)

At present he is taking a course of Diploma of Education in the Chinese University of Hong Kong so that he will be equipped to have a better design of the curriculum and method of teaching. The sense of being able to improve his work acted as a motivator for his continued commitment. Actually, the amount of time and effort that he had put into the job is considered by him as the current source of stress.

In summary, the teaching experience here led Luther to undergo enormous changes of his conception of teaching. Abandoning the idealistic picture of teaching and living with students happily in the school campus, the efficacy of maintaining classroom order was vital to his sense of satisfaction as well as the decision to stay

in the school. Support from colleagues was crucial in getting him out of dissatisfaction and frustration.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

"Schools are not equal as places in which to develop a teaching career" (Yee, 1990, p.93). Psychological theories tend to visualize a passive image of man; studies in sociology of education until 1970s are predominated with grand theories such as structural-functionalism and Marxism in which the role of actors lies on perpetuating the societal system of reproduction. Since then the debate on linking macro theories with micro studies becomes a central concern, and the direction is diverted into school researches (see Woods, 1980). The careers of teachers are put into focus, and a spectrum of their affective and behavioral ingredients are analyzed. Viewed in this context, the present study can be located into one of the main currents in sociology of education on teachers' experience of career paths. At the same time, prevalent studies in job satisfaction could be recasted in a new light. In this conclusion, various lines of arguments in previous chapters are synthesized, major ideas nested together, and practical implications raised.

The following sections are organized in reverse order from previous discussion. The classroom context will first be recapitulated, and it is followed by a discussion on the environment surrounding and influencing the activities in classrooms. The meaning of job satisfaction will then be reassessed in view of the present perspective, and after which some possible research directions are suggested.

Inside the Classroom: Efficacy from Instruction and Discipline

It has been argued that the image of man implicit in current psychological studies is one which responds to the needs and dispositions without the process of interpretation. If we depart from the opposite assumption, the picture would be different. The scenario of classroom activities is one in which teachers and students are no longer puppets but active agents. Each actor has a set of objectives brought into the classroom, and they devise strategies during the interaction process in the hope of achieving them.

In arguing for an active image of man, it is not the intention here that actors are totally free in defining their means and ends. Roles in a classroom serve to cut across individual differences as people in their specific roles have been attached with a set of rules and values. Seen in this way, the overwhelming objective of a teacher's role becomes one of knowledge transmission with the prerequisite provision of a sound classroom order, and they are equipped with institutionalized authority to accomplish these objectives. Similarly, a set of aims such as acquisition of knowledge are embedded in the role of being a student and they strive to accomplish it by putting utmost effort to absorb the curriculum taught by teachers.

Undoubtedly, the diverse patterns of teachers and students found in everyday life has every ground to question the above analysis. The problem with it is that the meaning of the role, that is, of what constitutes a teacher or students should not be pre-defined. Put it in other words, the content of a role is not an intrinsic property; the meaning is defined and perpetuated by the group of people under a specific context. Thus other people have influence on what an actor feels and perform; the actor learns his objective and means through the culture of his reference groups.

Even a teacher instructing in the classroom alone does not mean that he/she is working without constraints from other colleagues. Their sense of competency is often judged indirectly through other means such as the noise emitted from the classroom or accounts by students (Denscombe, 1985; Nias et al., 1989). Correspondingly, students form cliques and they have their own set of standards and value systems (Coleman, 1961). Student cultures may range from the advocation of the value system upheld by the school to another extreme where students develop anti-culture towards the school value (Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970).

Thus agents in classroom are not acting towards one another in a social vacuum. With the imputation of values by the role which is defined by their reference groups, the classroom becomes the stage where the drama of the protagonists are performed. The possible conflicting interests from the two parties has implied that a harmonic and friendly atmosphere should not be taken-for-granted. Various strategies are operating from "initial encounter" to the building up of a "working consensus" (Hargreaves, 1972; Pollard, 1985).

The pursue of different goals by teachers and students thus render discipline and instruction in classroom problematic. In the present study, two aspects deserve attention in tracing back the source of their difference. First, it arises from the consequences of the streaming process according to the ability of students, which is well documented in the literature of sociology of education (see Hammersley for a review of the differentiation-polarization thesis). Part of the evidence can be found among teachers. Although they do not consider themselves directly contributing to the process, they are well aware of the consequences by their observations that students in selected classes have higher self-esteem and conformity to the school

values than other classes. The second determinant is exogenous to the school, that is, it rests on the environment in which the school is embedded. To be more specific, they are the effects from a change in the educational policies (nine-year compulsory education) together with the peculiar features of the district. The introduction of the banding system that gives rise to the intake of increasing portion of low ability students due to the distant location has made discipline and instruction as serious problems at school level.

When the focus is placed on teachers, the diversity of teaching experience in terms of affection and behaviour in the same classes of students becomes more apparent. Some are managed to maintain a pleasurable relations with students in classroom while some feel upset and annoyed. Those who cannot adapt to the situation may result in "spoiled career" (Goffman, 1961).

The concept of efficacy is argued here as an important component in switching teachers from frustration to satisfaction. The value of the concept rests on bridging factors in the work environment and the affection as well as the behaviour of teachers in classrooms. The accounts of teachers in CSS has demonstrated that teachers with high efficacy have a different interpretation of events in classroom from those with low efficacy. The self-referent evaluation process decides whether previous efforts are in vain or influential. In this sense, the evaluation of their actions is an important switchman in which the path of satisfaction and frustration is channelled.

Here an implication can be drawn. It is ironic that teachers often feel powerless and frustrated to change the situation when they aspire students to achieve better and persuade them that hopes and dreams could be realized with strong determination. To those who consider teaching in classrooms as their career, they

should be the first group of people whose sense of efficacy must be nurtured. They should bear in mind that their interpretations on what happen in classrooms can have long-term consequences to both students and to themselves. Although the implication should not go too far to a point that what teachers think would inevitably lead to the corresponding changes on the situation, the margin of power held by them should not be underestimated too. In the era where students would only be more difficult to discipline and instruct, it seems that only those teachers who are not easily frustrated and always keep on trying new methods would eventually succeed in reaping psychological harvests from students in the classroom. Those who have a prior diagnosis of incurable diseases on students are doomed to work in boredom or struggles.

In addition, the analysis poses serious doubts that enhancing the pace of professionalization and ensuring teachers with adequate qualifications alone can be the solutions to all teaching problems. Knowledge undoubtedly plays an important ingredient in the process of teaching, but it is best treated as a necessary but not sufficient condition. The pedagogy, that is, the way teachers teach in the classroom, gains the same weight as the possession of a body of knowledge or qualification. The implication from the concept is that the experience of successful classroom performance works in a more direct influence to the sense of securing job satisfaction. More than that, it is the process of attributing the success to self (the personal efficacy) that can make one feel satisfied. Opportunities should be enhanced to make teacher acquire such experiences, and tolerance must be given to failure attempts to attain them.

Beyond the Classroom: Influence from School and Society

A central theme in the present study is that what happens in the classroom cannot be divorced from the context. In other words, the sense of efficacy experienced by teachers should not be treated as an inborn trait or equipped by chance; they are bound by the influence of work environment and especially the culture in the staffroom.

Although it is not task here to demonstrate the macro-micro linkage, it is proposed that the culture of teachers constitutes an intermediate level, at least theoretically, as Hargreaves (1980) puts it:

> At the theoretical level the teachers' culture is a significant but inadequately formulated intervening variable between the macro and micro levels of sociological analysis, which we are currently seeking to articulate. At the micro (especially phenomenological) level we may focus on the dilemmas experienced by and the coping strategies generated by teachers in their routine activities; at the macro level we may examine the constraining power of economical and political forces and the societal contradictions in which the education system is embedded. Between the experiential teacher dilemmas and the structural contradictions lies the mediating culture of teachers (p.126).

The research has shown that the culture of teachers act as a buffer between the commands signalled by the school authority and the activities behind classroom doors. The school has its policies and philosophies on students' discipline and instruction, but that does not necessarily mean that teachers must show unconditional support to them. In face of dual pressure from school authority and students in classroom, teachers as a collective group come to share a simi

^T126^^^S (pective on the common problems they are facing, and it results in the formation of a distinctive culture interpreting the school policies.[12] Newcomers

[12] It should be noted that variations of actions does not mean that no common perspective is shared among members of the group. Different strategies are possible under a common perspective, and Lacey (1977) has powerfully demonstrated this point by

come to acquire them in due course of their work in school, and the channels are by and large informal in nature.

Nevertheless, there exists different degrees of collegiality or collaboration directly related to the practices in classrooms. Help and assistant are found differently in the staff team as they are constrained by the structure of communication channels, or the form of culture. Staffroom location and the network of a class co-ordinated by the class master/mistress are found to be the lines of divisions in this school.

The argument that teachers' sense of efficacy is affected by the culture of teachers could be comprehended in two ways. First, the careers of teachers in this study has illustrated that collegial support can affect the sense of efficacy of teachers. For those teachers with high efficacy, they could find substantive help from colleagues when they have encountered problems about students in classroom. In addition, the recipes or inventories in the school serves to give practical references to teachers as to what methods are effective. These forms of assistance help teachers develop an interpretation that the students are not as "incurable" as they first appear.

The second meaning is that the culture of teachers serves to construct what objectives are important for teachers in a classroom. If the efficacy gained by teachers are not valued as important, it would not give him/her much satisfaction. In contrast, the aspect of work considered by teachers as important but failed to develop the sense of efficacy is equally frustrating. Teachers in CSS have developed a common understanding that academic performance is not the most important aspect

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establishing a typology of "social strategies".

to be treasured for. Respect and discipline are far more meaningful for students, and it becomes their source of satisfaction. As a result, teachers have learnt to adjust their expectations on students, and some strategies are found in which the academic component is heavily undermined.[13]

The above analysis may convey an implication to the school administrators, especially in an atmosphere where there is in general low level of job satisfaction in the teaching profession. The school undoubtedly has to face many constraints which are beyond their control, and the intensity of restriction is becoming stricter in the foreseeable future. But it does not mean that the school cannot make a difference. The foregoing analysis of efficacy has brought an important message, especially to those schools preoccupied with students having discipline and instruction problems. In contrast to the view that an unfavourable environment will inevitably lead to an air of frustration and stress, it is the subjective perception of the environment that is more determining. Hence the key of success rests on the ability of school administrators to transform the judgement of teachers. The principal must have the "efficacy" on their policies: that the school can make a difference. From the above analysis, it reveals that a deeper understanding on the interpretation of teachers towards school policies becomes necessary because it serves to mediate the rules that directly shape what teachers think and behave.

In addition, the research suggests that the application of extrinsic rewards are not adequate to improve the performance of teachers, as the current studies suggested

[13] It is analogous to the "survival strategies" by Woods (1979) in which teachers in his studies have primary importance in maintaining the classroom order at the expense of instruction.

(T.H. Wong, 1988, K.C.Wong, 1990). Since the workplace can change what are the objectives to be valued as well as enhancing the possibility of how they could be achieved, the resources a school actually possesses is far more than its financial resources. To take a step further, these influences could affect their quality of work instead of just minimizing adverse effects such as absenteeism and turnover.

In recapitulating the arguments contained in the research, it still leaves an important question intact: the meaning of job satisfaction. No complete analysis can afford to avoid confronting the issue, as Locke has made this point in his review two decades ago. Therefore the last part of the conclusion attempts to put forth a tentative definition of the concept conducive to further researches.

The Meaning of Job Satisfaction: in Search for Intelligence

The bewildering amount of researches on job satisfaction is associated with the conceptual ambiguity of the concept, and the disastrous shortcomings has been exposed in many reviews (Locke, 1976; O'Connell, 1980; Staw, 1984). In psychological studies, it is generally treated as a positive orientation towards the job. More vigorous ways of refining such attitudinal definitions came from Locke (1976) who defined it as the "pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (p.1300). Definitions denoting a more behavioralistic tone include the "willingness to remain in a current school organization despite inducements to leave" (Belasco and Alutto, 1972) and "the willingness to choose teaching as one's occupation a second time" (Lortie, 1975).

Without further complicating the issue by the problem of dimensionality[14], the amorphous conceptualization has left considerable space for every scholar to define their own versions of "job satisfaction". A point common in most of these definitions, however, is that they all involve a process of comparison in regardless of the object that is being compared. What marks the divergence is the basis of comparison, which can be ranged from purely individualistic and psychological standard to one that takes into account the judgement of other persons.

The present research suggests that the basis of comparison comes from reference groups, that is, the colleagues working in the same school. Leaving aside the vague terms such as needs and dispositions, further studies should investigate how the culture of teachers shape the sense of efficacy experienced by teachers in their experience of job satisfaction. Seen in this light, the definition by Pedro Ng (1973) is instructive for further researches:

> ... satisfaction is akin to the feeling of how well one has performed or how much one has achieved. It is thus in part a sense of efficacy, derived from judging one's work in a rather broad context which is likely to take into account other people's reactions and evaluations as well as one's own standards and aspirations (p.13).

Thus the affection experienced by an actor is closely related to the action in context. Moreover, the meaning of the action is a function of the judgements provided by oneself and the referent groups in his work. It leads to the study of affection beyond the method of introspection and directs our focus on the surrounding environment.

Drawing insights from the dispositional approach, the research attempts to go

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[14] The vague definitions has brought about the problem of obscure measurement. Currently there still lacks a consensus of using an overall measurement for a generalized affective response to the job or employing facet measures to ask for responses to particular components of work. See Ng (1973) and Kottkamp (1990).

beyond a static view of job satisfaction into a more dynamic, diachronic conceptualization. The affection of job satisfaction experiened by individual teachers can be seen as adjustments to the perspectives shared by the reference groups, in which the values shared by the latter are influenced by the environment. In refuting the unilinear explanation by dispositional theorists, the present research unravels the possible oscillations of teachers' affection over time.

Directions for further researches

The research is a pioneering study of the problematic of job satisfaction in both theoretical and methodological aspects. It adopts the method of case study and reveals the importance of the social context -- including the educational policy, school policy as well as the culture of teachers -- in affecting one's affection and behaviour. From this study, there are some directions the researcher considers as worthy of further investigation. First, a classification or typology of job satisfaction has to be established. In view of the common sense that successful instruction is the source of satisfaction, satisfaction from discipline is delineated and protratied in this study. In addition, comparative research of schools in different settings, e.g. different bandings, sex and districts, is necessary in order to confirm the validity of the present findings. Apart from examining the importance of teachers' culture, it is instructive to study how it is intertwined with other factors in eliciting job satisfaction of teachers.

All in all, the research indicates that the culture of teachers powerfully affects the formation of teachers' job satisfaction. In demonstrating the flaws of assumptions in psychological studies, it is time that further studies on job satisfaction should

abandon their needs and dispositions to create invisible constructs and direct efforts to the social forces which have real and tangible impacts on the affections and behaviours of actors.

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Appendix I

Attn: (Blank due to anonymity)

I write to give you an outline of the introduction of my research project to be presented during the staff meeting held on 30 August, 1994.

I am Lee Wai Tong, Richard, a postgraduate student (M.Phil; Year 2) in Sociology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Part of the requirements to my study programme is to submit a research-based thesis on a selected topic. My proposed research project will be an intensive study of the daily life of a secondary school, with the main focus on the teaching situations faced by the teachers. As a result, I have to familiarize myself with a school by participating intensively in its operations as well as conducting interviews with its staff.

Through the introduction of Mr. K.C.Chan, I am most delighted to have the approval from the principal, [the name], to conduct the research here. The period of data collection takes about three months, which involves a documentary study of the school history and the observation of the school functions and festivals. The most crucial part of my research, however, involves interviewing most of the teachers about their views on their work situations. I hope to arrange the interviews with minimal interference to your time arrangements. May I first thank all of you in assisting my research through your co-operation.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Lee Wai Tong,
Department of Sociology,
CUHK.

Appendix II

The questionnaire intends to gather some statistical data on the teaching envorinment of this school and career development of teachers. Completion of this questionnaire takes only a few minutes and all data will be kept confidential. Thanks for your cooperation.

On Teaching Assignment for this academic year

1 a. How many years have you been teaching? ____ years
b. How many years have you been teaching in this school? ____ years
c. How many subjects do you need to teach? ____ subjects
d. Is teaching your first job? _____ Yes _____ No
e. Have you worked in other professions? _____ Yes _____ No

2. About what percentage of your time was spent handling classroom behaviour or attendance problem?

___ 0 - 20%
___ 21 - 40%
___ 41 - 60%
___ 61 - 80%
___ 81 - 100%

3. In an average week, how many hours did you spend on school related responsibilities -- including time spent in the classroom, after school and at home ? _____ hours a week

4. Considering the number and kind of students and classes that you had to teach, how would you assess your workload ? (Please circle your answer)

Very Unmanagable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Managable

5. How effective did you feel you were in getting students to improve ?

On academic performance Very Unsuccessful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Successful
On behavioural changes Very Unsuccessful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Successful

On Teaching Career and Early Years in Profession

6. Why did you decide to become a teacher ? Please rank your most important 3 answers by putting "1" next to your first choice and etc.

___ I fell into it by accident.
___ There were few job opportunities when I decide to teach.
___ I liked the vacations, work hours and job security.
___ I always wanted to / I thought I'd be good at it.
___ I like working with young people.
___ Others (pls specify) _____

7. When you first started teaching here, how long did you intend to stay ?

___ until retirement
___ for a long time
___ for a few years only
___ until I had children
___ I don't know

8. At the end of your first year teaching in this school (or up till now for new teachers), how did you feel about your success as a teacher? (please circle your answer)

Very Dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Satisfied

On Future Work Plan

9. What is the likelihood of your being in this school in 5 years?

___ highly likely ___ likely ___ Uncertain
___ Unlikely ___ highly unlikely

10. Please rate each of the following reasons in terms of its importance to your staying in this school:

1 = Very Unimportant 5 = Very Important	(Please circle your answer)
a. Pay	1 2 3 4 5
b. Job security	1 2 3 4 5
c. Collegial relations	1 2 3 4 5
d. Promotion opportunities	1 2 3 4 5
e. Location of school	1 2 3 4 5
f. Chance to associate with students	1 2 3 4 5
g. Family responsibilities	1 2 3 4 5
h. Limited job opportunities outside school	1 2 3 4 5
i. Satisfaction of seeing academic improvement of students	1 2 3 4 5
j. Schedule (Working hours, vacations)	1 2 3 4 5
k. Opportunity to pursue outside interests	1 2 3 4 5
l. School policy and administration	1 2 3 4 5
m. Other (pls specify) _____	1 2 3 4 5

11. Please rank the above options by writing down the alphabet in terms of your primacy of staying in this school:

___ primary reason ___ second reason ___ third reason

12. Please rate each of the following reasons in terms of its importance to your leaving this school:

1 = Very Unimportant 5 = Very Important	(Please circle your answer)
a. Job security	1 2 3 4 5
b. Lack of promotion	1 2 3 4 5
c. Poor collegial relations	1 2 3 4 5
d. Pay	1 2 3 4 5
e. Family responsibilities	1 2 3 4 5
f. Lack of academic accomplishment with students	1 2 3 4 5
g. Want to have a try on other profession	1 2 3 4 5
h. Long hours of work	1 2 3 4 5
i. Monotony / Routine of job	1 2 3 4 5
j. Discipline problem of students	1 2 3 4 5
k. Others (pls. specify) _____	1 2 3 4 5

13. Please rank the above options by writing down the alphabet in terms of your primacy of leaving this school:

___ primary reason ___ second reason ___ third reason

14. If you have the possibility of leaving in 5 years, what do you anticipate doing then?

___ retire ___ pursue further study
___ teach at another school ___ raising children
___ working another job ___ I'm not sure
___ others (please specify) _____

15. Are you currently seeking / preparing yourself for another job ? ___ Yes ___ No

16. Have you seriously considered leaving teaching this school in the past ? When?

___ Yes ___ No Which Year ? _____

17. How would the principal / panel head rate your teaching performance this year?

Below Average 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Above Average

On Teaching Environment

	Very dissatisfied						Very Satisfied
18. How satisfied are you teaching at this school ?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. How satisfied are you teaching as a job ?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

20. How important would you consider in teaching students the following aspects ?

	Very Important						Very Unimportant
a. Improvements on academic performance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Behavioral improvement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. Learning proper values; to be a "good" person	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

21. Do you have a feeling of belonging to a "family" with other colleagues in this school?
Very strong 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very weak

22. How often do you have the following activities with colleagues ?

	Very Frequent						Very Infrequent
a. Sharing your personal lives and causal talks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Sharing the stress generated from students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. Seek help from colleagues when needed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. Routine sharing of material / method of teaching	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e. Shared responsibility for the work of teaching	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

23. How adequate is the following to your teaching in this school ?

	Poor						Excellent
a. Teaching facilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Support for discipline	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. Support from parents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

24. How often do you feel under great stress this year?
___ Almost every day
___ Several days a week
___ Once/Twice a week
___ Less often than once a week
___ Never
___ I am not sure

25. Please rank the most important 3 sources of stress in your teaching. ("1" as most important)
___ Class size
___ Insufficient time to give guidance to students
___ Non-teaching paperwork
___ Discipline problems
___ Lack of time
___ Unable to arouse students' motivation to learn
___ Lack of facilities for teaching
___ Poor academic quality of students
___ Relations with colleagues
___ Others (pls. specify) _____

26. What do you think about the non-teaching workload here?
Very Light 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Heavy

27. How would you consider the assessment of teaching performance by the school here?
Very Loose 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Tight

Some Background Information

27. Sex: ___ M ___ F

28. Age:

___ 20-25 ___ 26-30 ___ 31-35 ___ 36-40
___ 41-45 ___ 46-50 ___ 51-55 ___ 56 +

29. Marital Status: ___ Single ___ Married ___Others

30. Pay scale in the school:

___ CM ___ AM ___ SAM ___ GM ___ SGM

31. Which staffroom do you belong to?

___ at third floor ___ at second floor ___ at PE room

Appendix III

Summary of important statistics of the questionnaire in Appendix II

Table 9 Satisfaction of teachers regarding teaching in CSS and teaching as a job

	Satisfied[1]	Neutral affection	Dissatisfied
Teaching at this school (Q.18)	9	3	4
Teaching as a job (Q.19)	7	4	4[2]

Table 10 Perceived effectiveness of teachers in improving academic performance and behaviour of students (Question 5)

	Successful[3]	Neutral	Unsuccessful
Academic performance	4	6	5
Behavioral changes	7	5	3

Table 11 Respondents of teachers towards staying in CSS for next 5 years

	More likely	Uncertain	More unlikely
Likelihood of staying in 5 years (Q.9)	9	5	2

[1] Respondents circling 5 to 7 are regarded as being satisfied and those circling 1 to 3 are regarded as dissatisfied. Neutral affection is represented by those circling 4 in their answer.

[2] The number of respondents for this item and question 5 is 15 as one respondent fails to complete them.

[3] Respondents circling 1 to 3 are regarded as feeling unsuccessful, 5 to 7 as successful, and 4 as neutral.

Appendix IV

In-depth interview schedule

1. *Initial commitment*

1.1 Occupational history
- Why did you decide to become a teacher?
- Have you considered other careers before teaching?
- Have you taught in other schools? Why do you choose to teach here?

1.2 First experience of teaching in this school
- What is the teaching condition when you came to teach here?
  - Why do YOU have such experiences? How does it affect your teaching (Subjective experience of workplace environment)
- What is the most difficult thing about that year? How do you overcome it?

1.3 Decision to stay or leave
- How long do you think to stay after your first year teaching?
- What are the MOST IMPORTANT factors would you take into consideration?

2. *Commitment at present*

- What are the most stressful things for you at present? How to deal with?
- What is the most rewardful thing in your present teaching?

2.1 Decision to stay or leave
- Do you want to leave the teaching profession in near future?
- Do you intend to leave this school next year? What are the reasons?

For those who will leave teaching:
- What factors push you to leave here?
- What conditions would cause you to change your mind?
- What would you look for in another job?

For those who plan on staying in teaching here:
- What factors induce you to stay in this school?
- Have you considered leaving here before? If so, what made you stay after all?
- Under what conditions would you leave this school?

For those who are uncertain:
- What factors are the most important in your staying?
- Under what conditions would you leaving teaching here?
- How easy do you think it would be for you to get another job that you like now?

3. *Other aspects*

- How would you characterize the social relations among the colleagues here?
- Do colleagues give you support in your teaching?
- Do school administration give you support in your teaching?

* Extra time and effort put in the school
    - do you consider your workload as manageable?
    - do you need to put a lot of extra effort on students?
    - what keeps you so committed to the job?